

2007. D. 7.

DIRECTIONS  
FOR  
BEHAVIOUR,  
IN  
Twenty-Eight Choice  
EPISTLES.

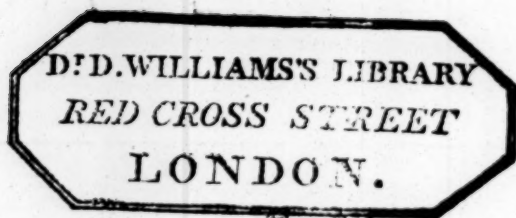
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# Epistles.

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## EPIST. I.

*Certain General Directions for the Government of the Voice; as in speaking Soft, or Loud; Quick, or Slow. The Speech is the Index of the Mind.*



You say well, that in Speaking, the very Ordering of the Voice, (to say nothing of the Actions, Countenances, and other Circumstances that accompany it) is a Consideration worthy of a Wise Man. There are, that prescribe Certain Modes of Rising, and Falling; Nay, if you will be govern'd by Them, you shall not speak a word, move a step, or eat a Bit, but by a Rule: And these perhaps are too Critical. Do not understand me yet, as if I made no Difference betwixt entring upon a Discourse Loud, or  
B Soft;

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Soft; for the Affections do Naturally Rise by Degrees; and, in all Disputes, or Pleadings, whether Publick, or Private, a Man should properly Begin with Modesty, and Temper, and so Advance by little and little, if need be, into Clamor, and Vociferation. And as the Voice Rises by Degrees, let it fall so too; not Snapping off upon a sudden, but Abating, as upon Moderation: The other is Unmannerly, and Rude. He that has a Precipitate speech, is commonly violent in his Manners: Beside that, there is in it much of Vanity, and Emptyness; and no Man takes satisfaction in a Flux of Words, without Choice; where the Noise is more than the Value. *Fabian* was a Man Eminent, both for his Life, and Learning; and no less for his Eloquence. His Speech was rather Easie, and Sliding, than Quick: Which he accounted to be, not only Lyable to many Errors, but to a Suspicion of Immodesty. Nay, let a Man have Words never so much at Will, he will no more speak Fast, than he will Run, for fear his Tongue should go before his Wit. The Speech of a *Philosopher* should be like his

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his Life, Compos'd, without Pressing, or Stumbling; which is fitter for a Mountebank, than a Man of Sobriety, and Business: and then to drop one word after another, is as bad on the other side. The Interruption is Tedious, and tires out the Auditor with Expectation. Truth, and Morality, should be deliver'd in Words Plain, and without Affectation; for, like Remedies, unless they stay with us; we are never the better for them. He that would work upon his Hearers, must no more expect to do it upon the Post, than a Physitian to Cure his Patients, only in passing by them. Not but that I would have a Wise Man, in some Cases, to Raise himself, and mend his Pace; but still with a regard to the Dignity of his Manners; though there may be a great force also in Moderation. I would have his Discourse smooth, and Flowing, like a River; not Impetuous, like a Torrent. There is a Rapid, Lawless, and Irrevocable Velocity of Speech, which I would scarce allow, even to an Orator; for if he be transported with Passion, or Ostentation, a Mans Attention can hardly keep him

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Company. It is not the Quantity, but the Pertinence, that does the business. Let the words of an Antient Man flow Soft, and Gentle; let those of an Orator come off Round, and Powerful; but not run on without Fear, or Wit, as if a whole Declamation were to be but one Period. *Cicero* wrote with Care, and that which will for ever stand the Test. All Publick Languages are according to the Humor of the Age: A Wantonness, and Effeminacy of Speech denotes Luxury; for the Wit follows the Mind: If the Latter be Sound, Compos'd, Temperate, and Grave, the Wit is Dry, and Sober too: but if the One be Corrupted, the other is likewise unsound. Do we not see when a Mans Mind is heavy, how he Creeps, and Draws his Legs After him? A Finical Temper is read in the very Gesture, and Cloths; if a Man be Cholerick, and Violent, it is also discover'd in his Motions. An Angry Man speaks Short, and Quick; the Speech of an Effeminate Man is Loose, and Melting. A Queint, and Sollicitous way of speaking, is the sign of a Weak Mind; but a Great Man speaks with Ease, and Freedom;  
and

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and with more Assurance, though less care. Speech is the *Index* of the Mind; When you see a Man Dress, and set his Cloths in Print, you shall be sure to find his Words so too, and nothing in them that is Firm, and Weighty: It does not become a *Man* to be *Delicate*. As it is in Drink, the Tongue never Trips, till the Mind be Over-born; So it is with Speech; so long as the Mind is Whole, and Sound, the Speech is Masculine, and Strong; but, if one Failes, the other follows.

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EPIST. II.

## EPIST. II.

*Of Stiles, Compositions, and the Choice of Words. That's the best way of Writing, and Speaking, which is Free and Natural. Advice concerning Reading.*

**Y**OU cannot expect any *Certain*, and *Universal Rule*, either for the *Stile*, or for the *Manner of Speaking*, or *Writing*, because they vary according to *U- sage*, and *Occasion*. So that we must content our selves with *Generals*. Men Write, and Speak commonly according to the humor of the Age they live in: And there is also a Correspondence betwixt the *Language*, and the *Life of Particular Persons*; as one may give a near Guess at a Man, by his very Gate, Furniture, and Cloths. In the first place, let the Sence be *Honest*, and *Noble*; not pinch'd up into Sentences; but *Substantial*, and of *Higher Design*, with nothing in it *Superfluous*. Let the Words be fitted to the Matter; and where the Sub-  
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ject is Familiar, let the Stile be so too. But great thoughts must have suitable Expressions ; and there ought to be a kind of Transport in the One, to Answer it in the Other. It is not enough to compose a pleasant Fable ; and tickle the Phanſie ; but he that Treats of Weighty Matters, must do it in Grave, and Sober Terms. There are some that have not much of the vigor of an Orator ; or of that Sententious Sharpness ; and yet the Worthiness of the Sence, makes amends for the Lowness of the Stile. Our Fore-fathers were not at all delighted with fine Words, and Flowers : But their Compositions were Strong, Equal, and Manly. We have now adayes here and there a Poynt ; but the Work is Uneven, where only This, or That Particular is Remarkable. We never admire This, or That single Tree, where the Whole Wood is all of a Height. A Specious Title-Page may commend a Book to Sale, but not for Use. An Eminent Author is to be taken down Whole, and not here and there a Bit. 'Tis a Maiming of the Body to take the Members of it apart :

Nor is it a Handsom Leg, or Arm, that makes a Handsom Man; but the Symmetry, and Agreement of all together. It is the Excellency of Speaking, and Writing, to do it Close; and in Words accommodate to the Intention; and I would yet have somewhat more to be signify'd, than is Deliver'd; It being also a Mark of Strength, and Solidity of Judgment. The Propriety of words, in some Cases, is Wonderful; especially when we are well read in the Knowledge of Things, and of Duties; and there is a Singular Grace in the Gentleness of Numbers, when they run Smooth, and without Perturbation. Some are rais'd, and Startl'd at Words, as a Horse is at a Drum; and indue the very Passion of the Speaker. Others are mov'd with the Beauty of things; and when they hear any thing bravely urg'd against Death, or Fortune, they do secretly wish for some Occasion of Experimenting that Generosity in themselves. But not one of a Thousand of them, that carries the Resolution home with him that he had conceiv'd. It is an easie matter to ex-  
cite



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cite an Auditory to the Love of Goodness, having already the Foundation, and the Seeds of Virtue within themselves: So that it is but awakening the Consideration of it, where all Men are agreed before-hand upon the Main. Who is so Sordid, as not to be rouz'd at such a Speech as this? *The Poor Man wants many things, but the Covetous Man wants All.* Can any Flesh forbear being delighted with This saying, though a Satyre against his own Vice. As to forc'd *Metaphors*, and wild *Hyperbole's*, I would leave them to the *Poets*. And I am utterly against Fooling with Tinckling Conceipts, and Sounds: Not that I would wholly forbid the use of *Hyperboles*; which, although they exceed the Truth, may yet be a means, by things Incredible, to bring us unto things Credible. And there may be great use made also of *Parables*: For the way of Application does usually more affect the Mind, than the downright Meaning. That Speech which gains upon the Passions, is much more Profitable than that which only works upon the Judgment, *Chrysippus* was a Great

Great Man, and of an Acute Wit; but the Edge of it was so fine, that every thing turn'd it : and he might be said, in truth, rather to Prick the Subject that he handled, than to Pierce it Through.

As it is not for the Honor of a *Philosopher*, to be Sollicitous about Words: I would not have him negligent neither: But, let him speak with Assurance, and without Affectation. If we can, let our Discourses be Powerful; but however, let them be Clear. I like a Composition that is Nervous, and Strong; but yet I would have it Sweet, and Gracious withal. There are many things, I know, that please well enough in the Delivery, and yet will hardly abide the Test of an Examination. But, That Eloquence is Mischievous, that diverts a Man from Things, to Words; and little better than a Prostitution of Letters. For, What signifies the Pomp of Words, or the Jumbling of Syllables, to the making up of a Wise Man? *Tully's* Composition indeed is equal; his Numbers are Harmonious, Free, and Gentle: And yet he

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he takes a Care, not to make any forfeiture of his Gravity. *Fabian* is a Great Man, in being Second to *Cicero*: *Pollio* is a Great Man too, though a step below him; and so is *Livy* likewise, though he comes after the other Three. But several Subjects require several Excellencies: An *Orator* should be Sharp; the *Tragedian*, Great; and the *Comedian*, Pleasant. When a Man Declaims against Vice, let him be Bitter; against Dangers, Bold; against Fortune, Proud; against Ambition, Reproachful: Let him Chide Luxury; Defame Lust: An Impotency of Mind must be Broken. In these Cases, Words are the least part of an Honest Mans Business.

In the Matter of Composition, I would Write as I Speak; with Ease and Freedom; for it is more Friendly, as well as more Natural: And so much my Inclination, that if I could make my mind visible to you, I would neither Speak, nor Write it. If I put my Thoughts in good Sense, the Matter of Ornament I shall leave to the *Orators*. There are  
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some things that a Man may Write even as he Travels; Others, that require Privacy, and Leisure. But however, it is good in Writing, as in other Cases, to leave the best Bit for the last. A *Philosopher* has no more to do, than to speak properly, and in words that express his Meaning. And this may be done without Tossing of the Hands, Stamp-ing, or any Violent Agitation of the Body; without either the Vanity of the Theatre, on the one hand, or an Insipid Heaviness, on the other. I would have his Speech as plain, and single, as his Life; for he is then as good as his Word, when both Hearing him, and Seeing him, we find him to be the same Person. And yet if a Man can be Eloquent, without more pains than the thing's worth, let him use his Faculty: Provided, that he value himself upon the Matter, More than upon the Words; and apply himself rather to the Understanding, than to the Phantasy; for this is a business of Virtue, not a Tryal of Wit. Who is there that would not rather have a Healing, than

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a Rhetorical *Physitian*? But, for esteeming any Man purely upon the score of his Rhetorick, I would as soon chuse a Pilot for a good head of Hair.

In the matter of Reading; I would fix upon some Particular Authors, and make them my own. He that is every where, is no where; but like a Man that spends his Life in Travel, he has many Hosts, but few Friends. Which is the very Condition of him; that skips from one Book to Another; The Variety does but distract his Head; and, for want of Digesting, it turns to Corruption, in stead of Nourishment. 'Tis a good Argument of a Well Compos'd Mind, when a Man loves Home, and to keep Company with Himself. VWhereas a Rambling Head is a Certain Sign of a Sickly Humor. Many Books, and many Acquaintances, bring a Man to a Levity of Disposition, and a Liking of Change. What is the Body the better for Meat, that will not stay with it? Nor is there any thing more Hurtful in the Case of Diseases, or Wounds,



Wounds, than the frequent shifting of Physick, or Plaisters. Of *Authors*, be sure to make Choice of the Best; and, (as I said before) to stick Close to them; and, though you may take up Others by the By, reserve some Select Ones however for your Study, and Retreat. In your Reading, you will every day meet with Consolation, and Support, against Poverty, Death, and Other Calamities, Incident to Humane Life: Extract what you like; and then single out some Particular from the rest, for That dayes Meditation. Reading does not only Feed, and Entertain the Understanding; but when a Man is doz'd with One Study, he relieves himself with Another: But, still Reading, and Writing are to be taken up by Turns. So long as the Meat lies whole upon the Stomach, it is a Burthen to us; but upon the Concoction it passes into Strength, and Blood. And so it fares with our Studies; so long as they lye whole, they pass only into the Memory, without affecting the Understanding: But, upon Me-

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Meditation, they become our Own,  
and Supply us with Strength, and  
Virtue: The Bee that wanders, and  
Sips from every Flower, disposes what  
she has Gather'd into her Cells.

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### **EPIST. III.**

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## EPIST. III.

*Against all sorts of Affectation in Discourse. Phantastical Studies; Impertinent, and Unprofitable Subtilties. Mans Business is Virtue, not Words.*

**T**Here are many men, ( and some of great Sence too) that lose both the Profit, and the Reputation of good Thoughts, by the Uncouth manner of Expressing them: They love to talk in *mystery*, and take it for a marque of *wisdom*, not to be *Understood*. They are so fond of making themselves Publique, that they will rather be Ridiculous, than not taken Notice of. When the Mind grows Squeamish, and comes to a Loathing of things that are Common as if they were *Sordid*, That Sicknes betrays it self in our way of Speaking too: for we must have *New Words, New Compositions*, and it passes for an Ornament, to borrow from other Tongues, where we may be better furnished in our Own.

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One Man Prizes himself upon being *Concise*, and talking in *Parables*: Another runs himself out in *Words*; and that which He takes only for *Copious*, renders him to Others both *Ridiculous*, and *Tedious*. Others there are, that Like the Error well enough, but cannot come Up to't. But, take this for a Rule; *Where-soever the Speech is Corrupted, so is the Mind*. Some are only for Words *Antiquated*, and long since out of *Date*; Others only for that which is *Popular*, and *Course*; and they are Both in the Wrong; for the One takes too Little Care, and the Other too Much. Some are for a *Rough, broken Stile*; as if it were a thing *Unmanly* to please the *Ear*; Others are too Nice upon the Matter of *Number*, and make it rather *Singing*, than *Speaking*. Some affect not to be understood till the end of the Period, and hardly then neither. 'Tis not good; a *Stile* that is either too *Bold*, or too *Florid*; the One wants *Modesty*, and the Other, *Effect*. Some are too *Starch'd*, and *Formal*; Others take a Pride in being *Rugged*; and if they chance to let fall any thing that is Smooth, they'll transpose,

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and mangle it on purpose, only to maim the Period, and Disappoint a Bodies Expectation. These Errors are Commonly introduc'd by some person that is famous for his Eloquence ; Others follow him, and so it passes into a Fashion. And we are as much out in the Choice of the Matter, as in That of our Words.

There are some Studies which are only Matter of Curiosity, and Trial of Skill; Others of Pleasure, and of Use: but still there are many things worth the Knowing perhaps, that were not worth the Learning. It is a huge deal of time that is spent in Cavilling about Words, and Captious Disputations, that work us up to an Edge, and then Nothing comes on't. There are some Tricks of Wit, like slight of hand, which amount to no more than the Tying of Knots only to Loosen them again ; And it is the very Fallacy that pleases us; for, so soon as ever we know how they are done, the Satisfaction is at an End. He that does not understand these *Sophismes*, is never the worse, and he that does, is never the better. If a Man tells me that

I have Hornes, I can'tell him again, That I have None, without Feeling on my Forehead. Bion's *Dilemma* makes *All Men to be Sacrilegious*, and yet, at the same time, maintains, That there is no such thing as *Sacrilege*. *He that takes to himself, (sayes he) what belongs to God, Commits Sacrilege; but all things belong to God, Therefore he that applies any thing to his own Use, is Sacrilegious.* On the other side, the very *Rifling* of a *Temple* he makes to be *No Sacrilege*: for 'tis (says he) *but the taking of something out of One place, that belongs to God, and removing of it to Another that belongs to him too.* The Fallacy lies in This, that though all things *Belong* to him, all things are not yet *Dedicated* to him. There is no greater Enemy of Truth, than over-much Subtilty of Speculation. *Protagoras* will have every thing *Disputable*, and as much to be said for the One side, as for the Other. Nay, he makes it another Question, *Whether every thing be Disputable, or no.* There are Others that make it a *Science*, to prove, That *Man knows Nothing*: But, the Former is the more Tolerable Error; for the Other

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takes away the very Hope of Knowledge; and it is better to know that which is Superfluous, than nothing at all. And yet it is a kind of Intemperance to desire to Know more than Enough; for it makes Men Troublesome, Talkative, Impertinent, Conceited, &c. There is a Certain Hankering after Learning, which, if it be not put into a right way, hinders, and falls foul upon it self. Wherefore the Burthen must be fitted to the Shoulders, and no more than we are Able to Bear. It is, in a great Measure, the Fault of our Tutors, that teach their Disciples rather how to Dispute, than how to Live: And the Learner himself is also to blame, for applying himself to the Emprovement, rather of his Wit, than of his Mind: By which means, *Philosophy* is now turn'd to *Philology*. Put a *Grammarian* to *Virgil*; he never heeds the *Philosophy*, but the *Verse*: Every Man takes Notes for his own Study. In the same Meadow the *Cow* finds Grass, the *Dog* starts a *Hare*, and the *Stork* snaps a *Lizzard*. *Tully's de Republicâ* finds work both for the *Philosopher*, the *Philologer*, and the  
Gram-

*Grammarian.* The *Philosopher* wonders how it was Possible to Speak so much against *Justice*. The *Philologer* makes This Observation, that *Rome* had *Two Kings*, the One without a *Father*, and the Other without a *Mother*; for 'tis a Question who was *Servius his Mother*, and of *Ancus his Father*, there is not so much as any Mention. The *Grammarian* takes notice, that *Reapse* is used for *Reipsa*; and *Sepse* for *Seipse*: And so every Man makes his Notes for his own Purpose. These Fooleries apart, let us learn to do good to Mankind, and put our Knowledge into Action. Our Danger is the being Mistaken in Things, not in Words; and in the Confounding of Good, and Evil. So that our whole Life is but one continued Error, and we live in Dependency upon to morrow. There are a World of things to be Study'd, and Learn'd, and therefore we should Discharge the Mind of things Unnecessary, to make way for Greater Matters. The Business of the Schools is rather a Play, than a Study; and only to be done when we can do nothing else.



There are many People that frequent them, only to Hear, and not to Learn; and they take Notes too, not to reform their Manners, but to pick up words, which they Vent, with as little Benefit to Others, as they heard them, to Themselves. It costs us a great deal of time, and other Mens Ears a great deal of trouble, to purchase the Character of a Learned Man: Wherefore I shall e'en content my self with the Courser Title of an Honest Man. The worst of it is, that there is a Vain, and Idle Pleasure in't, which tempts us to squander away many a precious hour to very little Purpose. We spend our selves upon Subtilties, which may perchance make us to be thought Learned, but not Good. Wisdom delights in openness and Simplicity; in the Forming of our Lives, rather than in the Niceties of the Schools, which, at best, do but bring us Pleasure without Profit. And, in short, the things which the *Philosophers* impose upon us with so much Pride, and Vanity, are little more than the same Lessons over again, which they learn'd at School. But some Authors

thors have their Names up, though their Discourses be mean enough; they Dispute, and Wrangle, but they do not Edifie, any farther, than as they keep us from Ill doings, or perhaps stop us in our speed to wickedness. And there ought to be a Difference betwixt the Applauses of the Schools, and of the Theatre; the One being mov'd with every Popular Concept, which does not at all Consist with the Dignity of the Other. Whereas there are some Writings that Stir up generous Resolutions, and do, as it were, inspire a Man with a new Soul. They display the Blessings of a Happy Life, and possess me at the same time with Admiration, and with Hope. They give me a Veneration for the Oracles of Antiquity; and a Claim to them, as to a Common Inheritance; for they are the Treasure of Mankind, and it must be my Duty to emprove the Stock, and transmit it to Posterity. And yet I do not love to hear a Man scite *Zeno*, *Cleanthes*, *Epicurus*, without some thing of his Own too. What do I care for the bare Hearing of That which I may

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Read? Not but that word of mouth makes a great Impression, especially when they are the Speakers own Words: But he that only recites Another Mans Words, is no more to me than a Notary. Beside that there's an end of Invention, if we rest upon what's Invented already; and he that only Follows Another, is so far from finding out any thing New, that he does not so much as look for't. I do not pretend all this while to be the Master of Truth, but I am yet a most Obstinate Inquisitor after it. I am no Mans Slave; but as I ascribe much to Great Men, I challenge something to my self. Our Fore-Fathers have left us, not only their Invention, but Matter also for farther Enquiry; and perhaps they might have found out more things that are Necessary, if they had not bent their thoughts too much upon Superfluities.

Is not This a fine time for us to be fiddling, and fooling about Words? How many Useful, and Necessary things are there, that we are First to Learn, and Secondly,



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ly, to Imprint in our Minds? For 'tis  
not enough to Remember, and to  
Understand, unless we Do what we  
Know.

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### **EPIST. IV.**

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## EPIST. IV.

*Business, and want of News, are no Excuse among Friends, for not Writing: Wise Men are the better for one another. How far Wisdom may be advanc'd by Precept.*

**Y**OUR Last Letter was very short; and the whole Letter it self was little more than an Excuse for the shortness of it. One while you are so full of *Business*, that you cannot write at all; and Another while, you have so little *News*, that you do not know what to Write. Now, assure your self, that whosoever has a Mind to Write, may find Leisure for't: And, for your other Pretence, it looks as if we our selves were the least part of our own business. Put the Case that the whole World were Becalm'd; and that there were neither VVars, Amours, Factions, Designs, Disappointments, Competitors, or Law-Suits; No Prodigals, Usurers, or Fornicators in Nature; there would be a large  
Field

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Field yet left for the Offices of Friendship; and for the exercise of Philosophy, and Virtue. Let us rather consider, what we our Selves Ought to do, than hearken after the Doings of other People. What signifies the Story of our *Neighbours* Errors, to the Reforming of our *Own*? Is it not, a more Glorious, and Profitable Employment, to write the History of *Providence*, than to Record the Usurpations of *Ambitious Princes*; and rather to Celebrate the *Bounties* of the *Allmighty*, than the *Robberies* of *Alexander*? Nor is Business any Excuse, for the Neglect, either of our Studies, or of our Friends. First, we Continue our own Business; and Then, we Increase it: And in stead of Lending, we do wholly Give our selves up to't; and hunt for Colourable Pretences of Misspending our Time. But, I say, that where ever we are, or with whomsoever, or However Employ'd, we have our Thoughts at Liberty.

You have here drawn a long Letter from me; and if you find it Tedious, you may thank your self, for calling upon me to be as good as my VVord. Not  
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but that I write by Inclination too. For if we love the Pictures of our Friends, by what hand soever they be drawn, How much more then shall we joy in a Friends Letters, which are undoubtedly the most Lively Pictures of one another? It is a shame, you'll say, to stand in need of any Remembrancers of an Absent Friend; and yet sometimes the Place, a Servant, a Relation, a House, a Garment, may honestly excite the Memory; and it renders every thing as Fresh to us, as if we were still joyn'd in our Embraces, and drinking up one anothers Tears. It is by the Benefit of Letters, that Absent Friends are in a manner brought together; beside that *Epistolary Discourses* are much more Profitable than Publick, and Premeditated Declamations: for they Insinuate themselves into the Affections with more Freedom, and Effect, though with less Pomp, and Pretence. You do expect, perhaps, that I should tell you, how gentle, and short a VVinter we have had; how Cold, and unseasonable a Spring; or some other Fooleries, to as little purpose. But, VVhat are you and I the Better for such Discourses?

courses? VVe should rather be laying the Foundations of a Good Mind ; and learning to distinguish betwixt the Blessings of Virtue, and the Amusements of Imagination. There came in some Friends to me yesterday, that made the Chimney smoak a little more than Ordinary; but not at a rate to make the Neighbourhood cry out *Fire*. VVe had variety of Discourse; and passing from one thing to another, we came at last to read something of *Quintus Sextius*: (a Great Man, upon my Credit, deny it that will) Good God! The Force and Vigour of that Mans Writings! And how much are they above the Common Level of other Philosophers! I cannot read them methinks, without Challenging of Fortune, and Defying all the Powers of Ambition, and Violence. The more I Consider him, the more I Admire him; for I find in him, (as in the World it self) *every Day* to be a *new Spectacle*, and to afford Fresh Matter still for more Veneration. And yet the Wisdom of our Fore-fathers has left work enough for their Posterity; even if there were no more in it than the Application of  
what

what they have transmitted to us of their own Invention. As, suppose that they had left us Remedies for such and such Diseases; so Certain, that we should not need to look for any other Medicines; there would be some Skill yet required in the Applying of them in the proper Case, Proportion, and Season. I have an honor for the Memorials of our worthy Progenitors. If I meet a *Consul*, or a *Prætor* upon the Road, I'll alight from my Horse, uncover my Head, and give him the way; and, Shall I have no Veneration now for the Names of the Governors of Mankind? No Man is so wise, as to know all things; or if he did, one Wise Man may yet be helpful to another, in finding out a nearer way to the finishing of his work: For, let a Man make never so much haste, it is some sort of Assistance, the bare Encouraging of him to continue his Course; beside the Comforts, and Benefits of Communication, in Loving, and being Belov'd, and in the mutual Approbation of each Other.

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The last Point, you know, that you and I had in Debate, was, *Whether or no Wisdome may be perfected by Precept.* There are some that accompt only that part of *Philosophy* to be Profitable to Mankind, which delivers it self in Particular Precepts to Particular Persons, without Forming the whole Man. Teaching the Husband (for the Purpose) how to behave himself to his Wife; the Father how to Train up, and Discipline his Children; and the Master, how to Govern his Servants. As if any Man could be sufficiently Instructed in the Parts of Life, without Comprehending the whole Sum, and Scope of it. Others, (as *Aristo the Stoique*) are rather for the General Decrees of Philosophers; which whosoever knows in the main, that person understands in every Particular how to Tutor himself. As he that learns to cast a Dart, when he has by Practice, and Exercise, gotten a true Aim, he will not only strike This, or That Mark, but whatever he has a Mind to: So he that is well enformed in the *Whole*, will need no Direction in the *Parts*: But under  
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the Principles of a Good Life, Learn how to behave himself in all the Circumstances of it. *Cleanthes* allows the *Parænetick*, or *Preceptive Philosophy*, to be in some sort Profitable; but yet very Short, and Defective; unless as it flows from the Universal Understanding of the Heads, and Decrees of *Philosophy*. Now the question is, Whether This alone can make a Good Man; and whether it be Superfluous it self; or so Sufficient, as to make all other Knowledge appear so. They that will have it Superfluous, argue Thus. If the Eyes be cover'd, there's no Seeing, without removing the Impediment; and, in that Condition, it is to no purpose to bid a Man go to such, or such a Place, or to reach This or That with his hand. And so it fares with the Mind; So long as That continues Clouded with Ignorance, and Error, 'tis Idle to give Particular Precepts; as if you should teach a Poor Man to act the Part of a Rich; or one that is Hungry, how to behave himself with a Full Stomach: While the One is Necessitous, and the Other half Starv'd, they are neither of them the Better for't. And then shall  
we



we give Precepts in *Manifest Cases*, or in *Doubtful*? The *Former* need none; And in the *Latter*, we shall not be believ'd. Nor is it enough Simply to advise, unless we also give Reasons for't. There are Two Errors which we are liable to in this Case; either the Wickedness of Perverse Opinions, which have taken Possession of us; or at least a Disposition to Entertain Error, under any Resemblance of Truth. So that our work must be, either to Cure a Sick Mind, that is already Tinted; or to prepossess an Evil Inclination, before it comes to an Ill Habit. Now the Decrees of *Philosophy* enable us in both these Cases; Nor is it possible, by Particulars, to Obviate all Particular Occasions. One Man Marries a Widow, another a Maid: She may be Rich, or Poor; Barren, or Fruitful; Young, or Antient; Superior, Inferior, or Equal. One Man *follows* Publick Business; another *flies* it; so that the same Advice that is Profitable to the One, may be Mischievous to the Other. Every ones is a Particular Case, and must be suited with a Particular Counsel. The Laws  
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of *Philosophy* are Brief; and extend to all; but the Variety of the Other is Incomprehensible, and can never make that good to all, which it promises to a few. The *Precepts* of Wisdom lie Open, but the *Decrees* of it are Hidden in the Dark.

Now, in Answer. It does not hold with the Mind, as with the Eye: If there be a Suffusion, it is to be help'd by Remedy, and not by Precept. The Eye is not to be taught to Distinguish of Colours; but the Mind must be Enform'd what to do in Life. And yet the Physitian will prescribe Order also to the Patient, as well as Physick; and tell him, *You must bring your Eye to endure the Light by Degrees; have a Care of Studying upon a full Stomach, &c.* We are told, That Precepts do neither Extinguish, nor Abate false Opinions in us of Good, or Evil: and it shall be Granted, that of Themselves they are not able to Subdue Vicious Inclinations: But this does not hinder them from being very useful to us in Conjunction with other Helps. First, as they refresh the Memory;

ry; and Secondly; as they bring us to a more Distinct view of the Parts, which we saw but Confusedly in the Whole. At the same rate, Consolatories, and Exhortations will be found superfluous, as well as Precepts. Which yet upon Daily Experience we know to be otherwise. Nay, we are the better, not onely for the Precepts, but for the Converse of *Philosophers*; for we still carry away somewhat of the Tincture of Virtue, whether we will or no: But the Deepest Impression they make, is upon Children. It is Urged, that Precepts are Insufficient without Proof; but I say, that the very Authority of the Adviser, goes a great way in the Credit of the Advice: As we depend upon the Opinion of the Lawyer, without demanding his Reason for't. And again; whereas the Variety of Precepts is said to be Infinite, I cannot allow it: For the greatest and most Necessary Affairs are not Many; and for the Application to Time, Places, and Persons, the Differences are so small, that a few General Rules will serve the Turn. Nay, let a Man be never so Right in his Opinion, he may yet be more Confirm'd

in it by Admonition. There are many things that may assist a Cure, though they do not perfect it; Even Mad men themselves may be kept in Awe by Menaces, and Correction. But, it is a hard matter, I must confess, to give Counsel at a Distance. For Advice depends much upon the Opportunity; and That perhaps which was Proper, when it was Desir'd, may come to be Pernicious, before it be Receiv'd. Some indeed may be Prescrib'd, as some Remedies, at any Distance; and transmitted to Posterity; but for Others, a Man must be upon the Place, and deliberate upon Circumstances; and be not only Present, but watchful, to Strike in with the very Nick of the Occasion.

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## EPIST. V.

*Seneca gives an Accompt of Himself:  
Of his Studies, and of his Inclinations:  
With many Excellent Reflections upon the Duties, and the Errors  
of Humane Life.*

**Y**Our Letters were Old, before they came to my hand; so that I made no Enquiry of the Messenger what you were a doing; beside that wherever you are, I take it for granted, that I know your Business; and that you are still upon the great Work of Perfecting your Self: A Thing, not to be done by Chance, but by Industry, and Labor. We are all of us Wicked, before we come to be Good. We are prepossessed, so that we must unlearn Iniquity, and study Virtue. The great Difficulty is, to Begin the Enterprize: For a weak Mind is afraid of New Experiments. I have now given over troubling my self for fear of you; because I have that security for your well doing, that never fail'd any Man.

The Love of Truth, and of Goodness, is become Habitual to you. It may so fall out, that Fortune perhaps may do you an Injury; but there's no Fear of your doing your self one. Go on as you have begun, and compose your Resolutions; not to an Effeminate Ease, but to a Frame of Virtuous Quiet. It is a Double Kindness that you call me to so strict an Account of my Time; that nothing less than a Diary of my Life, will satisfy you: for I take it as a Mark, both of your Good Opinion, and of your Friendship; The Former, in believing that I do nothing which I care to Conceal; and the Other; in assuring your self, that I will make you the Confident of all my Secrets. I will hereafter set a Watch upon my Self; and do as you would have me; and acquaint you, not only with the Course, and Method, but with the very Business of my Life.

This Day I have had entire to my self, without any Knocking at my Door, or lifting up of the Hanging; But I have divided it betwixt my Book, and my Bed; and been left at liberty to do my  
own



own Business: For all the Impertinents were either at the Theatre, at Bowls, or at the Horse-match. My Body does not require much Exercise, and I am beholden to my Age for it: A Little makes me Weary; and That's the end also of that which is most Robust. My Dinner is a Piece of Dry Bread, without a Table, and without fouling of my Fingers. My Sleeps are short, and in truth a little Doubtful, betwixt slumbering and waking. One while I am reflecting upon the Errors of Antiquity; and then, I apply my Self to the Correcting of my Own. In my Reading, with Reverence to the Antients, Some things I Take, Others I Alter; and some again I Reject; Others I Invent; without enthralling my self so to anothers Judgment, as not to preserve the Freedom of my Own. Sometimes of a sudden, in the Middle of my Meditations, my Ears are struck with the Shout of a Thousand People together, from some Spectacle or other: The Noise does not at all discompose my Thoughts; it is no more to me than the Dashing of Waves, or the Wind in a Wood; but possibly sometimes it may

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divert them. *Good Lord! think I, if Men would but exercise their Brains, as they do their Bodies; and take as much Pains for Virtue, as they do for Pleasure; For Difficulties Strengthen the Mind, as well as Labor does the Body.*

You tell me, That you want my Books more than my Counsels; which I take just as kindly, as if you should have ask'd me for my Picture. For I have the very same Opinion of my Wit, that I have of my Beauty. You shall have both the One, and the Other, with my very Self into the Bargain.

In the Examination of my own Heart, I find some Vices that lie Open; Others more Obscure, and out of Sight; and some that take me only by Fits. Which Last I look upon as the most Dangerous, and Troublesome; For they lie upon the Catch, and keep a Man upon a Perpetual Guard: Being neither provided against them, as in a State of War; nor Secure, as in any Assurance of Peace. To say the Truth, we are all of us as Cruel, as Ambitious, and as Luxurious  
as

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as our Fellows. But we want the Fortune, or the Occasion, perchance, to shew it. When the Snake is Frozen, 'tis Safe; but the Poyson is still in it, though it be Num'd. We hate Upstarts, that use their Power with Insolence; when yet if we had the same Means, 'tis Odds that we should do the same thing our selves. Only our Corruptions are Private, for want of Opportunity to Employ them. Some things we look upon as Superfluous; and Others, as not worth the while. But, we never consider, that we pay dearest for that which we pretend to receive *Gratis*. As Anxiety, Loss of Credit, Liberty, and Time. So Cheap is every Man in effect, that pretends to be most Dear to Himself. Some are Dipt in their Lusts, as in a River; there must be a hand to help them out: Others are Strangely Careless of Good Counsel; and yet well enough dispos'd to follow Example. Some again must be forc'd to their Duties: Because there's no Good to be done upon them, by Perswasion. But, out of the whole Race of Mankind, How few are there that are able to help themselves? Being thus  
Conscious

Conscious of our own Frailty, we should do well, to keep our selves quiet; and not to Trust Weak Minds with Wine, Beauty, or Pleasure. We have much adoe you see to keep our Feet upon Dry Ground: What will become of us then, if we venture our selves where it is Slippery? 'Tis not to say, *This is a hard Lesson, and we cannot go through with it.* For we *Can*, if we Would *Endeavour* it; But we *Cannot*, because we give it for granted That we *Cannot*, without trying whether we *Can* or *No*. And what's the Meaning of all This; but that we are pleas'd with our Vices; and willing to be Master'd by them. So that we had rather Excuse, than cast them off. The true Reason is, we *Will not*; but the Pretence is, that we *Cannot*. And we are not only under a *Necessity* of Error, but the very *Love* of it.

To give you now a Brief of my own Character; I am none of Those that take Delight in Tumults, and in Struggling with Difficulties; for had rather be Quiet, than in Armes: for I accompt it my Duty to bear up against Ill Fortune; but,  
without

without Chusing it. I am no Friend to Contention; Especially to That of the Barr: But I am very much a Servant to all Honest Business, that may be done in a Corner. And there is no Retreat so Unhappy; as not to yield Entertainment for a great Mind; by which he may make himself Profitable, both to his Country, and to his Friends, by his Wisdom, by his Interest, and by his Counsel. It is the Part of a good Patriot, to prefer Men of Worth; to Defend the Innocent; to Provide Good Laws; and to Advise in War, and in Peace. But, is not He as good a Patriot, that instructs Youth in Virtue; that furnishes the World with Precepts of Morality, and keeps Humane Nature within the Bounds of Right Reason? Who is the Greater Man, he that Pronounces a Sentence upon the Bench; or he that in his Study reads us a Lecture of Justice, Piety, Patience, Fortitude; the Knowledge of Heaven, the Contempt of Death, and the Blessing of a Good Conscience? The Soldier that guards the Ammunition and the Baggage, is as Necessary as he that fights the Battel. Was not *Cato* a greater Example



Example than either *Ulysses*, or *Hercules*? They had the Fame, you know, of being indefatigable; Despisers of Pleasures, and great Conquerors both of their Enemies, and of their Appetites. But *Cato*, I must Confess, had no Encounters with Monsters; nor did he fall into those Times of Credulity, when people believ'd, that the weight of the Heavens rested upon one Mans Shoulders. But he grappled with Ambition, and the unlimited Desire of Power; which the whole World, divided under a *Triumvirate*, was not able to satisfy. He Oppos'd himself to the Vices of a degenerate City; even when it was now sinking under its own weight. He stood single, and supported the falling Commonwealth, till at last, as Inseparable Friends, they were crush'd together: For Neither would *Cato* Survive the *Publick Liberty*; nor did *That Liberty* Outlive *Cato*.

To give you now a Farther Account of my Self; I am Naturally a Friend to all the Rules and Methods of Sobriety, and Moderation. I like the Old Fashion'd



shion'd Plate that was left me by my Country Father : It is Plain, and Heavy ; And yet for all this, there is a kind of Dazling methinks in the Ostentations of Splendor, and Luxury. But it strikes the Eye, more than the Mind ; and though it may shake a Wise Man, it cannot Alter him. Yet it sends me home many times sadder perhaps than I went out ; but yet, I hope, not Worse : though not without some secret Dissatisfaction at my Own Condition. Upon these Thoughts I betake my self to my *Philosophy* ; and then, methinks, I am not well, unless I put my self into some Publick Employment : Not for the Honor, or the Profit of it ; but only to place my self in a Station where I may be serviceable to my Country, and to my Friends. But, when I come, on the other side, to consider the Uneasiness, the Abuses, and the Loss of Time that attends Publick Affairs, I get me home again as fast as I can ; and take up a Resolution of spending the Remainder of my dayes within the Privacy of my own Walls. How great a madness is it to set our hearts upon Trifles ; especially to the neglect of the most

most serious Offices of our Lives, and the most important End of our Being? How Miserable, as well as Short, is their Life, that Compass, with great Labor, what they Possess with Greater; and Hold with Anxiety, what they Acquire with Trouble? But, we are govern'd in all things by Opinion, and every thing is to us, as we Believe it. What is *Poverty*, but a *Privative*; and not intended of what a Man *Has*, but of that which he has *Not*? The great Subject of Humane Calamities, is *Money*. Take all the Rest together, as Death, Sicknes, Fear, Desire, Pain, Labor; and those which proceed from *Money*, exceed them all. 'Tis a Wonderful Folly, that of Tumblers, Rope-Dancers, Divers, and what pains they take, and what hazards they run for an Inconsiderable Gain. And yet we have not Patience for the Thousandth Part of that trouble, though it would put us into the Possession of an everlasting Quiet. *Epicurus* for Experiment sake confin'd himself to a narrower Allowance, than that of the Severest Prisons to the most Capital Offenders; and found himself at Ease too in a stricter Diet than  
any

any Man in the Worst Condition needs to Fear. This was to prevent Fortune, and to Frustrate the Worst which she can do. We should never know any thing to be Superfluous, but by the Want of it. How many things do we provide, only because Others have them, and for fashion sake? *Caligula* offer'd *Demetrius* 5000 Crowns; who reject-ed them with a Smile, as who should say, *It was so little, it did him no honor the re-fusing of it. Nothing less, sayes he, than the Offer of his whole Empire could have been a Temptation to have try'd the Firm-ness of my Virtue.* By this Contempt of Riches, is intended only the Fearless Possession of them. And the way to attain That, is to perswade our selves, that we may live Happily without them. How many of those things, which Reason formerly told us were Superfluous, and Mimical, do we now find to be so by Experience? But we are misled by the Counterfeit of Good on the One hand, and the Suspicion of Evil on the Other. Not that Riches are an Efficient Cause of Mischief; but they are a Precedent Cause, by way of Irritation, and Attraction

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on. For they have so near a Resemblance of Good, that most People take them to be Good. Nay, Virtue it self is also a Precedent Cause of Evil; as many are Envy'd for their Wisdom, or for their Justice. Which does not arise from the thing it self, but from the Irreprovable power of Virtue, that forces all Men to Admire, and to Love it. That is not *Good*, that is *More Advantageous* to us, but That which is *Only* so.

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EPIST. V<sup>e</sup>

## EPIST. VI.

*The Blessings of a Virtuous Retirement.*

*How we come to the Knowledge of  
Virtue. A Distinction betwixt Good,  
and Honest. A Wise Man Contents  
himself with his Lot.*

There is no Opportunity of Enquiring Where you are, What you do, and, What Company you keep, that escapes me. And, I am well enough pleas'd, that I can hear nothing concerning you; for, it shews, that you live Retir'd. Not but that I durst trust you with the wide World too; But, however, it is not easie, such a General Conversation: Nor is it absolutely safe neither, for, though it could not Corrupt you, it would yet Hinder you. Now, wheresoever you are, know, that I am with you; and you are so to Live, as if I both heard, and saw you. Your Letters are really Blessings to me; and the sense of your Improvements relieves me, even under the Consideration of my  
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own decay. Remember, that as I am Old, so are you Mortal. Be true to your Self, and Examine your self, whether you be of the same Mind to day, that you were yesterday ; for, That's a Sign of Perfect Wisdom. And yet give me leave to tell you, that though Change of Mind be a Token of Imperfection ; it is the Business of my Age to Unwill One day, that which I Will'd Another. And let me recommend it to your Practice too, in many Cases ; for the Abatement of our Appetites, and of our Errors, is the best Entertainment of Mankind. It is for Young Men to Gather Knowledge, and for Old Men to Use it: And assure your self, that no Man gives a fairer Account of his time, than he that makes it his daily Study, to make himself Better. If you be in Health, and think it worth your while to become the Master of your Self ; it is my Desire, and my Advice, that you apply your self to Wisdom with your whole Heart : and judge of your Improvement, not by what you Speak, or by what you Write ; but by the firmness of your Mind, and the Government of your Passions. What Extremities  
have



have some Men endur'd in Sieges; even for the Ambition, and Interest of other People! And, Shall not a Man venture the Crossing of an Intemperate Lust, for the Conquest of himself? You do very well to betake your self to a Private Life; and better yet in keeping of that Privacy Private: For, otherwise, your Retreat would look like Ostentation: The greatest Actions of our Lives are those, that we do in a Recess from Business: Beside, that there are some Governments, and Employments, that a Man would not have any thing to do withall. And then it is to be consider'd, that Publick Offices, and Commissions, are commonly bought with our Mony; Whereas the great Blessings of Leisure, and Privacy, cost us Nothing. Contemplation is undoubtedly the best Entertainment of Peace; and only a Shorter Cut to Heaven it Self: Over and above that, Business makes us Troublesome to Others, and unquiet to our Selves; For, the End of One Appetite, or Design, is the Beginning of Another: To say nothing of the Expence of Time in Vexatious Attendances, and the Dan-

ger of Competitors. Such a Man perhaps has more Friends at Court, than I have; a larger Train; a Fairer Estate; more profitable Offices; and more Illustrious Titles: But, What do I care to be overcome by *Men*, in *Some Cases*, so long as *Fortune* is overcome by *Me* in *All*? These Considerations should have been Earlier; for, 'tis too late, in the Article of Death, to Project the Happiness of Life. And yet there is no Age better Adapted to Virtue, than that which comes by many Experiments, and long Sufferings, to the Knowledge of it: For our Lusts are then weak, and our Judgment Strong; And Wisdom is the Effect of Time.

Some are of Opinion, That we come to the Knowledge of Virtue by Chance; (which were an Indignity.) Others, by Observation; and by Comparing Matters of Fact, one with another; The Understanding, by a kind of *Analogy*, approving This, or That, for Good, and Honest. These are two Points which Others make wholly Different; but the *Stoicks* only Divide them. Some will have every thing to be Good, that is Beneficial

neficial to us: As Mony, Wine; and so Lower, to the meanest things we use. And they reckon That to be Honest, where there is a Reasonable Discharge of a Common Duty: As Reverence to a Parent; Tendernefs to a Friend; the Exposing of our Selves for our Country, and the Regulating of our Lives according to Moderation, and Prudence. The *Stoicks* reckon them to be Two; but so, as to make *those Two*, yet, out of *One*. They will have nothing to be Good, but what is Honest; nor any thing to be Honest, but that which is Good: So that in some fort they are Mix'd, and Inseparable. There are some things that are neither Good, nor Bad; as War, Embassy, Jurisdiction; but these, in the Laudable Administration of them, do, of Doubtful, become Good; which Good is only a Consequent upon Honesty: But honesty is Good in it self, and the Other flows from it. There are some Actions that seem to us Matter of Benignity, Humanity, Generosity, Resolution; which we are apt to admire, as Perfect: And yet, upon farther Examination, we find, that Great Vices were concealed

under the Resemblances of Eminent Virtues. Glorious Actions are the Images of Virtue; but yet many things seem to be Good, that are Evil; and Evil, that are Good: And the Skill is, to Distinguish betwixt things that are so much Alike in Shew, and so Disagreeing in Effect. We are led to the Understanding of Virtue, by the Congruity we find in such and such Actions to Nature, and Right Reason: By the Order, Grace, and Constancy of them; and, by a Certain Majesty, and Greatness, that surpasses all other things. From hence proceeds a Happy Life: To which, nothing comes Amiss; but, on the Contrary, every thing succeeds to our very Wish. There is no wrangling with Fortune; No being out of Humor for Accidents: whatsoever befalls me, is my Lot, and whether in Appearance it be Good, or Bad, it is Gods Pleasure; and it is my Duty to bear it. When a Man has once gotten a Habit of Virtue, all his Actions are Equal: He is constantly One, and the Same Man; and he does Well, not only upon Counsel, but out of Custome too. Shall I tell you now, in a Word, the

the Sum of Human Duty? *Patience*, where we are to Suffer; and *Prudence*, in the things we Do. It is a frequent Complaint in the World, that the things we Enjoy are but Few, Transitory, and Uncertain; So Ungrateful a Construction do we make of the Divine Bounty. Hence it is, that we are neither willing to Dye, nor Contented to Live; betwixt the Fear of the One, and the Detestation of the Other. Hence it is, that we are perpetually shifting of Counsels; and still craving of More; because that which we call Felicity, is not able to Fill us. And what's the Reason? But that we are not yet come to that Immense, and Insuperable Good, which leaves us nothing farther to desire! In that Blessed Estate we feel no want; we are abundantly pleas'd with what we Have; and what we have Not, we do not Regard: So that every thing is Great, because it is Sufficient. If we quit this Hold, there will be no place for the Offices of Faith, and Piety: In the Discharge whereof, we must both Suffer many things, that the World calls Evil, and part with many things which are commonly accompted



Good. True Joy is Everlasting ; Pleasures are False, and Fugitive. It is a great Encouragement to *well-doing*, that when we are once in the Possession of Virtue, it is our own for ever. While I speak This to you, I prescribe to my self; what I Write, I Read ; and Reduce all my Meditations to the Ordering of my own Manners. There is nothing so Mean, and Ordinary ; but it is Illustrated by Virtue ; and Externals are of no more Use to it, than the Light of a Candle to the Glory of the Sun.

It is often Objected to me, that I Advise People to quit the World , to Retire, and Content themselves with a good Conscience. But , What becomes of your Precepts then (say they) that enjoin us to Dy in Action ? To whom I must answer , That *I am never more in Action, than when I am alone in my Study ; where I have only Lock'd up my self in Private, to attend the Business of the Publick. I do not Lose so much as One Day ; nay, and part of the night too I borrow for my Book. When my Eyes will serve me no longer , I fall Asleep ; and, till Then, I*  
*Work.*



*Work. I have Retir'd my Self, not only from Men, but from Business also: And my Own, in the First Place, to attend the Service of Posterity; In hope that what I Now Write, may, in some Measure, be Profitable to Future Generations.*

But it is no New thing, I know, to Calumniate Virtue, and Good Men; for Sick Eyes will not endure the Light, but, like *Birds of Night*, they fly from it into their Holes. Why does such a Man talk so much of his *Philosophy*, and yet live in Magnificence? Of Contemning Riches, Life, Health; and yet Cherish, and Maintain them, with the greatest Care Imaginable? Banishment, he sayes, is but an Idle Name; and yet he can grow old within his own Walls. He puts no difference betwixt a Long Life, and a short; and yet he Spins out his Own, as far as it will go. The thing is This; He does not Contemn Temporary Blessings, so as to Refuse, or Drive them away; but if they Come, they are Welcome; if not, he'll never break his heart for the want of them: He takes them into his House, not into his Soul; and he makes use of them, only as Matter for his Virtue to  
work

work upon. There is no doubt but a Wise Man may shew himself better in Riches, than in Poverty: That is to say, his Temperance, his Liberality; his Magnificence, Providence, and Prudence, will be more Conspicuous. He will be a Wise Man still, if he should want a Leg, or an Arme; but yet he had rather be Perfect. He is pleas'd with Wealth, as he would be at Sea, with a Fair Wind; or with the Glance of the warm Sun, in a Frosty Morning: So that the things which we call Indifferent, are not yet without their Value; And some greater than Others. But, with this Difference, betwixt the *Philosophers*, and the Common People, Riches are the Servants of the One, and the Masters of the Other. From the One, if they Depart, they carry away nothing but Themselves; but from the Other, they take away the very Heart, and Peace of the Possessor along with them. It is true, that if I might have my Choice, I would have Health, and Strength; And yet if I come to be visited with Pain, or Sickness, I will endeavour to emprove them to my Advantage, by making a Righteous Judgment

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Judgment of them: as I ought to do, of all the Appointments of Providence. So that as they are not Good, in themselves, neither are they Evil; But matter of Exercise for our Virtues; of Temperance, on the One hand, and of Resignation, on the Other.

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**EPIST. VII.**

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## EPIST. VII.

*Of Impertinent Studies, and Impertinent Men. Philosophers the Best Companions.*

**H**E that duely Considers the Business of Life and Death, will find, that he has little time to spare from That Study : And yet how we trifle away our hours upon Impertinent Niceties, and Cavils ! Will *Platoe's* Imaginary *Idea's* make me an Honest Man ? There's neither Certainty in them, nor Substance. *A Mouse is a Syllable ; but a Syllable does not eat Cheese ; Therefore a Mouse does not eat Cheese.* Oh ! these Childish Follies ! Is it for This that we spend our Blood, and our Good Humour, and grow Grey in our Closets ? We are a jeasting, when we should be helping the Miserable ; as well our Selves as Others. There's no Sporting with Men in Distress. The Felicity of Mankind depends upon the Counsel of *Philosophers*. Let us rather consider what Nature has made Superfluous,

fluous, and what, Necessary : how Easie our Conditions are, and how Delicious That Life, which is govern'd by Reason, rather than Opinion. There are Impertinent Studies, as well as Impertinent Men. *Didymus* the *Grammarian* Wrote 4000 Books; wherein he is much Concern'd to discover Where *Homer* was born; Who was *Æneas's* true Mother; and whether *Anacreon* was the greater Whoremaster, or Drunkard: With other Fopperies, that a Man would labor to Forget, if he Knew them. Is it not an Important Question, which of the Two was First, the Mallet, or the Tongs? Some people are extremely Inquisitive, to know how many Oars *Ulysses* had: Which was first Written, the *Illyads*, or the *Odyssees*; or if they were Both done by the same hand. A Man is never a Jote the more Learned for this Curiosity, but much the more Troublesome. Am I ever the more Just, the more Moderate, Valiant, or Liberal, for knowing, that *Curius Dentatus* was the First that carry'd Elephants in Triumph? Teach me my Duty to Providence, to my Neighbor, and  
to

to my Self: To Dispute, with *Socrates*; to Doubt, with *Carneades*; to set up my Rest, with *Epicurus*; to Master my Appetites, with the *Stoiques*, and to Renounce the World, with the *Cynick*. What a deal of Business there is, First, to make *Homier* a *Philosopher*; and Secondly, in what *Classis* to Range him? One will have him to be a *Stoique*; a Friend to Virtue, and an Enemy to Pleasure; preferring Honesty even to Immortality it self: Another makes him an *Epicurean*; One that loves his Quiet, and to spend his Time in Good Company: Some are Positive in it, that he was a *Peripatetique*; and Others, that he was a *Sceptique*. But it is Clear, that in being all these things, he was not any One of them. These Divided Opinions do not at all hinder us from agreeing, upon the Main, that he was a *Wise Man*. Let us therefore apply our selves to those things that made him so, and e'en let the Rest alone.

It was a Pleasant Humor of *Calpurnius Sabinus*, a Rich Man, and one that me-  
nag'd



nag'd a very Good Fortune with a very Ill Grace. He had neither Wit, nor Memory ; but would fain pass for a Learned Man, and so took several into his Family ; And, whatsoever they knew, he assum'd to Himself. There are a sort of People that are never well but at Theatres, Spectacles, and Publick Places : Men of Business, but it is only in their Faces ; for they wander up and down without any Design, like *Pismires*, Eager, and Empty ; and every thing they do, is only *as it happens*. This is an humor, which a Man may call a kind of Restless Lazyness. Others you shall have, that are perpetually in Haste, as if they were Crying *Fire*, or running for a Midwife : and all this Hurry, perhaps, only to Salute some body, that had no mind to take Notice of them, or some such Trivial Errant. At Night, when they come Home tir'd, and weary, ask them, Why they went out ? Where they have been ? and, What they have done ? 'tis a very Slender Accompt they are able to give you ; and yet the next day they take the same *Jaunt* over again:  
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This is a kind of Phantastical Industry; a great deal of Pains taken to no purpose at all; Twenty Visits made, and no body at home (they themselves least of all.) They that have this Vice, are commonly Harkeners, Tale-Bearers, News-Mongers; Meddlers in other Peoples Affairs, and Curious after Secrets, which a Man can neither safely Hear, nor Report. These Men of Idle Employment, that run up and down eternally, vexing Others, and themselves too; that thrust themselves into all Companies, What do they get by't? One Man's Asleep; Another, at Supper; a Third, in Company; a Fourth, in Haste; a Fifth, gives them the Slip: and when their folly has gone the Round, they close up the Day with Shame, and Repentance. Whereas, *Zeno*, *Pythagoras*, *Democritus*, *Aristotle*, *Theophrastus*, and all the Patrons of *Philosophy*, and Virtue; they are always at Leisure, and in Good Humor; Familiar, Profitable; a Man never comes away empty handed from them; but, full of Comfort, and Satisfaction: They  
make

make all Past Ages Present to us; or Us, Their Contemporaries. The Doors of these Men are open Night, and Day; and in their Conversation there's neither Danger, Treachery, nor Expence; but we are the Wiser, the Happier, and the Richer for it. How blessedly does a Man spend his time in this Company, where we may advise, in all the Difficulties of Life. Here's Counsel, without Reproach; and Praise, without Flattery. We cannot be the Chusers of our Own Parents, but of our Friends we may; and Adopt our Selves into these Noble Families. This is the way of making Mortality, in a Manner, to be Immortal. The time Past, we make to be our Own, by Remembrance; the Present, by Use; and the Future, by Providence, and Foresight. That only may properly be said to be the Long Life, that draws all Ages into One; and That a short one, that Forgets the Past; Neglects the Present, and is Sollicitous for the Time to Come. But it is not yet sufficient to know what

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*Plato,*

*Plato* or *Zeno* said, unless we make it all our Own by *Habit*, and *Practice*, and Emprove both the World, and our Selves, by an Example of Life Answerable to their Precepts.

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## EPIST. VIII.

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## EPIST. VIII.

*Against Singularity of Manners, and  
Behaviour.*

**I**T is the Humor of many People, to be Singular in their Dress, and Manner of Life ; only to the End that they may be taken Notice of. Their Cloths, forsooth, must be Course, and Slovenly ; their Heads, and Beards neglected ; their Lodgings upon the Ground, and they live in Open Defiance against Mony. What is all this, upon the whole Matter, but an Ambitious Vanity that has crept in at the Back Dore? A Wise Man will keep himself Clear of all these Fooleries, without disturbing Publick Customs, or making himself a Gazing Stock to the People. But, Will This Secure him, think you? I can no more warrant it, than that a Temperate Man shall have his Health: But it is very Probable that it may. A *Philosopher* has enough to do to stand right in the World, let him be never so modest: And his out-side shall

be still like That of Other people, let them be never So Unlike *within*. His Garments shall be neither Rich, nor Sordid. No matter for Arms, Motto's, and other Curiosities upon his Plate: But he shall not yet make it a Matter of Conscience, to have no Plate at all. He that likes an Earthen Vessel as well as a Silver, has not a greater Mind then he that uses Plate, and reckons it as Dirt. It is our Duty to Live Better than the Common-People, but not in Opposition to them; as if *Philosophy* were a Faction; for by so Doing, in stead of Reforming, and gaining upon them, we drive them away; and when they find it unreasonable to Imitate us in All things, they will follow us in Nothing. Our Business must be to live according to *Nature*, and to own the Sense of Outward things with other people: Not to Torment the Body; and, with Exclamations against that which is Sweet, and Cleanly, to Delight in Nastiness; and, To use, not only a Course, but a Sluttish, and Offensive Diet. Wisdom Preaches Temperance, not Mortification; and a Man may be a very Good Husband, without being



being a Sloven. He that Stears a Middle Course, betwixt Virtue, and Popularity: That is to say, betwixt Good Manners, and Discretion, shall gain both Approbation, and Reverence. But, What if a Man Governs himself in his Cloths, in his Diet, in his Exercises, as he ought to do? It is not that his Garments, his Meat, and Drink, or his Walking, are things Simply Good; but it is the Tenor of a Mans Life, and the Conformity of it to Right Nature, and Reason. *Philosophy* obliges us to Humanity, Society; and the Ordinary Use of External things. It is not a thing to please the People with, or to entertain an Idle Hour; but a Study for the Forming of the Mind, and the Guidance of Humane Life. And a Wise Man should also Live as he Discourses; and in all Points be like himself: And, in the first place, set a Value upon himself, before he can pretend to become Valuable to Others: As well our Good Deeds, as our Evil, come home to us at last. He that is Charitable, makes others so by his Example; and finds the Comfort of That Charity, when he wants it himself. He that is Cruel, seldom finds Mercy. 'Tis

a hard Matter for a Man to be both Popular, and Virtuous; for he must be Like the People, that would oblige them: and the Kindness of Dishonest Men, is not to be acquir'd by Honest Means. He Lives by Reason, not by Custome; He shuns the very Conversation of the Intemperate, and Ambitious. He knows the Danger of Great Examples of Wick- edness, and that Publick Errors impose upon the World, under the Authority of Presidents: For they take for Grant- ed, that they are never out of the way, so long as they keep the Road.

We are beset with Dangers; and therefore a Wise Man should have his Virtues in Continual Readiness to En- counter them. Whether Poverty, Loss of Friends, Pain, Sicknes, or the like; He still maintains his Post: Whereas a Fool is Surpriz'd at every thing; and afraid of his Very Succors: Either he makes no Resistance at all, or else he does it by Halves. He will neither take Ad- vice from Others, nor look to himself: He reckons upon *Philosophy*, as a thing not worth his time, and if he can but get  
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## EPISTLES.

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the Reputation of a *Good Man* among the *Common People*, he takes no farther Care, but Accompts that he has done his Duty.

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EPIST. IX.

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## EPIST. IX.

*The Blessings of a Vigorous Mind, in a  
Decay'd Body ; with some Pertin-  
ent Reflections of Seneca upon his  
Own Age.*

WHEN I call *Claranus* my School-fellow, I need not say any thing more of his Age ; having told you, that He, and I, were *Cotemporaries*. You would not Imagine, how Green, and Vigorous his Mind is; and the perpetual Conflict that it has with his Body. They were Naturally *Mismatch'd*; unless to shew, that a Generous Spirit may be lodg'd under any shape. He has Surmounted all Difficulties ; and, from the Contempt of Himself, is advanc'd to the Contempt of All things else. When I consider him well, methinks his Body appears to me as fair as his Mind. If Nature could have brought the Soul Naked into the World, perhaps she would have done it : But yet she does a greater thing, in Exalting that Soul  
above

above all Impediments of the Flesh. It is a great Happiness, to preserve the Force of the Mind, in the Decay of the Body; and to see the Loss of Appetite More than Requited, with the Love of Virtue. But, whether I Owe This Comfort to my *Age*, or to *Wisdom*, is the Question. And whether, if I Could any longer, I Would not still, do the same things over again, which I Ought not to do. If Age had no other Pleasure than This, that it neither Cares for any thing, nor stands in need of any thing; it were a Great one to me, to have left all my painful, and troublesome Lusts Behind me. But, *'Tis uneasy*, you'll say, *to be always in Fear of Death*. As if That Apprehension did not Concern a Young Man as well as an Old; Or that Death only call'd us, according to our Years. I am however beholden to my Old Age, that has now confin'd me to my Bed; and put me out of Condition of doing those things any longer, which I should not do. The Less my Mind has to do with my Body, the Better: And if Age puts an end to my Desires, and does the Business of Virtue, there can be  
no

no Cause of Complaint ; nor can there be any Gentler End, than to melt away in a kind of Dissolution. Where Fire meets with Opposition, and Matter to work upon, it is Furious, and Rages ; but where it finds no Fewel, as in Old Age, it goes out quietly, for want of Nourishment. Nor is the Body the Settled Habitation of the Mind ; but a Temporary Lodging, which we are to leave whensoever the Master of the House pleases. Neither does the Soul, when it has left the Body, any more Care what becomes of the Carcass, and the several parts of it, than a Man does for the shavings of his Beard under the hand of the Barber. There is not any thing that Exposés a Man to more Vexation, and Reproach, than the overmuch Love of the Body : For Sence neither looks Forward, nor Backward, but only upon the Present : Nor does it judge of Good, or Evil ; or Foresee Consequences which give a Connexion to the Order, and Series of Things, and to the Unity of Life. Not but that every Man has Naturally a Love for his Own Carcass, as Poor People Love even their  
Own



Own Beggerly Cottages ; they are Old Acquaintances, and Loth to Part: And I am not against the Indulging of it neither ; provided that I make not my Self a Slave to it ; for he that serves it, has Many Masters. Beside that, we are in Continual Disorder ; One while with Gripes, Pains in the Head, Tooth-Ach, Gout, Stone, Defluxions ; some time with *too Much* Blood, other while with *too Little* : And yet this Frail, and Putrid Carkass of Ours values it self as if it were Immortal. We put no Bounds to our Hopes, our Avarice, our Ambition. The same Man is *Vatinius* to Day, and *Cato* to Morrow : This hour as Luxurious as *Apicius*, and the next as Temperate as *Tubero* : Now, for a Mistress ; by and by, for a Wife : Imperious This hour ; Servile, the Next ; Thrifty, and Prodigal, Laborious, and Voluptuous, by turns. But still the Goods, or Ills of the Body, do but Concern the Body, (which is Peevish, Sour, and Anxious) without any effect upon a Well-Compos'd Mind. I was the Other day at my *Villa* ; And, Complaining of my Charge of Repairs ; My *Bayliff* told me, *'Twas none of his Fault ;*

*Fault ; for the House was Old, and he had much adoe to keep it from falling upon his Head. Well (thought I) and what am I my Self then, that saw the laying of the First Stone? In the Gardens, I found the Trees as much out of Order ; the Boughs Knotted, and Wither'd, and their Bodies over-run with Moss. This would not have been, said I, if you had Trench'd them, and Water'd them, as you should have done? By my Soul, Master, sayes the poor Fellow, I have done what I could : But alas! they are all Dotards, and Spent. What am I then, (thought I to my self) that planted all these Trees with my own Hands. And then I come to bethink my Self, that Age it self is not yet without its Pleasures, if we did but know how to use them ; and that the Best Morfel is reserv'd for the Last: Or at worst, it is Equivalent to the Enjoying of Pleasures, not to stand in need of any. It is but yesterday, methinks, that I went to School. But Time goes faster with an Old Man, than with a Young: Perhaps, because he reckons more upon it. There is hardly any Man so Old, but he may hope for One day more yet: and the Longest*

Longest Life is but a Multiplication of Dayes, nay, of Hours, nay of Moments. Our Fate is Set; and the First Breath we draw, is but the First Step towards our Last. One Cause depends upon another; and the Course of All things, Publick, and Private, is only a Long Connexion of Providential Appointments. There is great Variety in our Lives; but all Tends to the same Issue. Nature may use her own Bodies as she Pleases; but a Good Man has this Consolation, that nothing Perishes that he can call his Own. What *Must* be, *Shall* be; and that which is a *Necessity* to him that Struggles, is little more than *Choice* to him that is Willing. 'Tis Bitter, to be Forc'd to any thing; but things are Easy, when they are Comply'd with.

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## EPIST. X.

*Custom is a great Matter, either in Good, or Ill. We should check our Passions Betimes. Involuntary Motions are Invincible.*

There is nothing so Hard; but Custom makes it Easie to us. There are some, that never Laugh'd; Others, that Wholly abstain'd from Wine, and Women; and almost from Sleep. Much use of a Coach makes us lose the Benefit of our Legs: So that we must be Infirm, to be in the Fashion; and, at last, lose the very Faculty of Walking, by Disusing it. Some are so plung'd in Pleasures, that they cannot Live without them. And, in This, they are most Miserable; that what was, at First, but Superfluous, is Now, become Necessary. But their Infelicity seems to be then Consummate, and Incurable, when Sensuality has laid hold of the Judgment; and Wickedness is become a Habit. Nay, some there are, that both Hate, and Persecute

cute Virtue; and that's the last Act of Desperation. It is much Easier to Check our Passions in the Beginning, than to stop them in their Course: For, if Reason could not hinder us at first; they will go on in despite of us. The *Stoicks* will not allow a Wise Man to have any Passions at all. The *Peripateticks* Temper them; but That Mediocrity is altogether False, and Unprofitable. And, 'tis all one, as if they said, That we may be a *Little Mad*, or a *Little Sick*. If we give any sort of Allowance to Sorrow, Fear, Desires, Perturbations, it will not be in our Power to restrain them. They are fed from Abroad; and will encrease with their Causes. And if we yield never so little to them, the least disorder works upon the whole Body. It is not my Purpose all this while, wholly to take away any thing, that is either Necessary, Beneficial, or Delightful to Humane Life; but, to take That away, which may be Vicious in it. When I forbid you to desire any thing, I am yet content that you may be Willing to have it. So that I permit you the same things: And those very Pleasures will have a  
Better

Better Rellish too, when they are enjoy'd without Anxiety ; and when you come to Command those Appetites, which before you serv'd. 'Tis Natural you'll say , to weep for the Loss of a Friend ; to be Mov'd at the Sense of a Good, or Ill Report, and to be Sad in Adversity. All this I'll grant you ; and there is no Vice, but something may be said for't. At First, 'tis Tractable, and Modest ; but, if we give it entrance, we shall hardly get it out again. As it goes on, it gathers strength, and becomes Quickly Ungovernable. It cannot be deny'd, but that all Affections flow from a Kind of Natural Principle ; and that it is our Duty to take Care of our selves. But then it is our Duty also, not to be over Indulgent. Nature has mingled Pleasures, even with things most Necessary ; Not that we should value them for their Own Sakes, but to make those things which we cannot live without, to be more Acceptable to us. If we Esteem the Pleasure for it self, it turns to Luxury, It is not the Business of Nature to Raise Hunger, or Thirst, but to Extinguish it.

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As there are some Natural Frailties, that by Care, and Industry, may be Overcome; So there are Others, that are Invincible: As, for a Man that values not his Own Blood, to Swoun at the Sight of another Mans. Involuntary Motions are Insuperable, and Inevitable; As the Staring of the Hair at Ill News; Blushing at a Scurrilous Discourse; Swiming of the head upon the sight of a Precipice, &c. Who can Read the Story of *Clodius* Expelling *Cicero*, and *Anthony's* Killing of him; the Cruelties of *Marius*, and the Proscriptions of *Sylla*, without being mov'd at it? The Sound of a Trumpet, the Picture of any thing that is Horrid, the Spectacle of an Execution, Strikes the Mind, and works upon the Imagination. Some People are strangely subject to Sweat, to Tremble, to Stammer; their very Teeth will Chatter in their Heads, and their Lips Quiver; and especially in Publick Assemblies. These are Natural Infirmities; and it is not all the Resolution in the World, that can ever Master them. Some Redden when

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they

they are Angry. *Sylla* was one of those; and when the Blood Flush'd into his Face, you might be sure he had Malice in his Heart. *Pompey*, on the other side (that hardly ever spake in Publick without a Blush) had a wonderful Sweetness of Nature; and it did exceedingly well with him. Your *Comedians* will represent Fear, Sadness, Anger, and the like; but when they come to a bashful Modesty, though they'll give you humbleness of Looks, softness of Speech, and down-Cast-Eyes, to the very Life, yet they can never come to express a Blush; for it is a thing neither to be Commanded, nor Hindred; but it comes and goes of its own accord. The Course of Nature is Smooth, and Easie; but when we come to Cross it, we strive against the Stream. It is not for one Man to Act another Mans Part. For Nature will quickly Return, and take off the Mask. There is a kind of Sacred Instinct that moves us. Even the worst, have a Sense of Virtue. We are not so much Ignorant, as Careless. Whence comes it, that Grazing Beasts distinguish Salutary Plants,

Plants, from Deadly? A Chicken is afraid of a Kite; and not of a Goose, or a Peacock, which is much Bigger: A Bird of a Cat, and not of a Dog. This is Impulse, and not Experiment. The Cells of Bees, and the Webs of Spiders, are not to be imitated by Art, but it is Nature that teaches them. The Stage-Player has his Actions, and Gestures in Readiness; but This is only an Improvement by Art, of what Nature teaches them; who is never at a Loss for the Use of her self. We come into the World with This Knowledge; and we have it by a Natural Institution; which is no Other, than a Natural *Logick*. We brought the Seeds of Wisdom into the World with us; but not Wisdom it self. There is the Goodness of God, and That of Man; the One is Immortal, the Other Mortal: Nature perfects the One, and Study the Other.

## EPIST. XI.

*We are Divided in our Selves; and  
Confound Good, and Evil.*

**I**T is no wonder that Men are Generally very much Unsatisfy'd with the World; when there's not One Man of a Thousand that agrees with himself: and that's the Root of our Misery; only we are willing to Charge our Own Vices, upon the Malignity of Fortune. Either we are Puff'd up with Pride; Wrack'd with Desires; Dissolv'd in Pleasures, or Blasted with Cares; and, which perfects our Unhappiness, we are never Alone, but in perpetual Conflict, and Controversie with our Lusts. We are Startled at all Accidents. We Boggle at our own Shadows, and Fright one Another. *Lucretius* says, that we are as much afraid in the Light, as Children in the Dark; but, I say, That we are alltogether in Darknes, without any Light at all; and we run on blindfold, without so much as Groping out our way: Which Rashness in the Dark is  
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*the worst sort of Madness.* He that is in his way, is in hope of coming to his Journeys End; but Error is Endless. Let every Man therefore Examine his Desires, whether they be according to Rectify'd Nature, or Not. That Mans Mind can never be Right, whose Actions Disagree. We must not Live by Chance; for there can be no Virtue without Deliberation, and Election. And, where we cannot be Certain, let us follow that which is most Hopeful, and Probable. Faith, Justice, Piety, Fortitude, Prudence, are Venerable, and the Possessions only of Good Men; but, a Plentiful Estate, a Brawny Arm, and a Firm Body, are Many times the Portion of the Wicked. The Perfection of Humane Nature, is that State, which supports it self, and so is out of the Fear of Falling. It is a great weakness for a Man to value himself upon any thing, wherein he shall be Out-done by Fools, and Beasts. We are to consider Health, Strength, Beauty, and other Advantages of That Kind, only as Adventitious Comforts: We may preserve them with Care, provided that we be alwayes ready to Quit them,

without Trouble. There is a Pleasure in Wickedness, as well as in Virtue, and there are, that take a Glory in it too; wherefore our Forefathers prescrib'd us the Best Life, and not the most Plentiful; and allow'd us Pleasure for a Companion, but not for a Guide. We do many times take the Instruments of Happiness, for the Happiness it self; and rest upon those Matters, that are but in the way to't. That Man only lives Compos'd, who thinks of every thing that May Happen, before he Feels it. But this is not yet to advise, either Neglect, or Indifference; For I would avoid any thing that may hurt me, where I may honorably do it. But yet I would consider the worst of things before-hand. Examine the Hope, and the Fear; and, where things are uncertain, favor your self, and believe That which you had rather should come to pass. There are not many Men that know their own Minds, but in the Very Instant of Willing any thing. We are for One thing to Day, another thing to Morrow; So that we Live and Die without coming to any Resolution: Still seeking That Elsewhere, which we may  
give



give our Selves; That is to say, a Good Mind. And, in truth, we do perswade our selves, that in several Cases, we do Desire the thing which effectually we do not Desire. And all This, for want of Laying down some Certain Principles, to make the Judgment Inflexible, and Steady. When we do any Evil, it is either for fear of a greater Evil, or in Hope of such a Good, as may more than Ballance that Evil. So that we are here Distracted betwixt the Duty of Finishing our Purpose, and the Fear of Mischief, and Danger. This Infirmary must be discharg'd. In the Pursuite of Pleasures, we should take Notice, that there are not only sensual, but sad Pleasures also, which Transport the Mind with Adoration, (though they do not Tickle the Senses) and give us a Veneration for those Virtues, that exercise themselves in Sweat, and Blood. All True Goods hold an Affinity and Friendship one with another; and they are Equal; but False Ones have in them much of Vanity; they are large, and Specious to the Eye; but, upon Examination, they want weight. Now, though Virtues are all Alike, they

may yet be distinguish'd into Desirable, and Admirable ; Virtues of Patience, and of Delight : But, in the Matter of Common Accidents, there is not any thing which is truly worthy, either of our Joy, or of our Fear. For Reason is Immoveable, and does not Serve, but Command our Senses. What is Pleasure, but a Low and Brutish thing ? Glory is Vain, and Volatile ; Poverty only hard to him that does not Resist it ; Superstition is a Frantick Error, that Fears where it should Love ; and Rudely Invades where it should Reverentially Worship. Death it self is no Evil at all, but the Common Benefit, and Right of Nature. There is a great Difference, betwixt those things which are Good in Common Opinion, and those which are so in Truth, and Effect : The Former have the Name of Good things, but not the Propriety : They may Befall us, but they do not Stick to us : And they may be taken away without either Pain to us, or Diminution. We may Use them ; but, not Trust in them ; For, they are Only Deposited ; and, they must, and will Forsake us. The only Treasure is That, which Fortune

tune has no Power over: And, the Greater it is, the Less Envy it carries along with it. Let our Vices Die before us, and let us Discharge our Selves of our Dear-bought Pleasures, that hurt us, as well Past, as to Come; for, they are follow'd with Repentance, as well as our Sins. There's neither Substance in them, nor Truth; for a Man can never be weary of Truth, but there's a Satiety in Error. The Former is alwayes the same, but the Latter is Various; and, if a Man looks near it, he may see through it. Beside that, the Possessions of a Wise Man are Maintain'd with Ease. He has no need of Embassadors, Armies, and Castles; but, like God himself, he does his Business without either Noise, or Tumult. Nay, there is something so Venerable, and Sacred in Virtue, that if we do but meet with any thing like it, the very Counterfeit Pleases us. By the help of *Philosophy* the Soul gives the slip to the Body, and Refreshes itself in Heaven. Pleasures, at best, are Short-Liv'd; but the Delights of Virtue are Secure, and Perpetual. Only we must Watch, Labor, and attend it our selves. For, 'tis a Business, not to be done  
by

by a Deputy. Nor is it properly a Virtue, to be a little better than the Worst. Will any Man boast of his Eyes, because they tell him that the Sun shines? Neither is he presently a Good Man, that thinks Ill of the Bad. For Wicked Men do That too; and 'tis perhaps the Greatest punishment of Sin, the Displeasure that it gives to the Author of it. The saddest Case of all is, when we become Enamour'd of our Ruine, and make Wickedness our Study. When Vice has got a Reputation, and when the Dissolute have lost the Only Good thing they had in their Excesses, the Shame of Offending. And yet the Lewedest part of our Corruptions, is in Private, which, if any body had look'd on, we should never have Committed. Wherefore, let us bear in our Minds the *Idea* of some great Person, for whom we have an Awful Respect; and his Authority will even Consecrate the very Secrets of our Souls; and make us, not only mend our Manners, and purifie our very Thoughts; but in good time render us Exemplary to Others, and Venerable to our Selves. If *Scipio*, or *Lælius* were but in our Eye, we

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we should not dare to Transgress. Why  
do we not make our selves then such  
persons, as in whose Presence we dare  
not offend?

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**EPIST. XII.**

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## EPIST. XII.

*We are Moved at the Novelty of things,  
for want of Understanding the Reason  
of them.*

**T**He whole Subject of *Natural Philosophy*, falls under these Three Heads; the Heavens, the Air, and the Earth. The First Treats of the Nature of the Stars; their Form, and Magnitude: The Substance of the Heavens; whether Solid, or not; and whether they move of Themselves, or be moved by any thing Else; whether the Stars be Below them, or fixed in their Orbs: In what manner the Sun divides the Seasons of the Year: and thelike. The Second Part Enquires into the Reason of things betwixt the Heavens and the Earth; as Clouds, Rain, Snow, Thunder, and whatsoever the Air either Does, or Suffers. The Third handles matters that have a regard to the Earth; as the difference of Soils, Minerals, Metalls, Plants, Groves, &c. *But, these are Considerations wholly forreign to*  
our



*our Purpose, in the Nature of them; though they may be of very Proper, and Pertinent Application.* There is not any Man so Brutal, and so Groveling upon the Earth, but his Soul is rouz'd, and carry'd up to higher Matters, and Thoughts, upon the Appearance of any New Light from Heaven. What can be more worthy of Admiration, than the Sun, and the Stars in their Courses, and Glory? And yet so long as Nature goes on in her Ordinary way, there's no body takes Notice of them: But, when any thing falls out beyond Expectation, and Custome, what a Gazing, Pointing, and Questioning, is there presently about it. The People gather together, and are at their Wits End; not so much at the Importance of the Matter, as at the Novelty. Every Meteor sets People agog to know the Meaning of it, and what it Portends; and whether it be a Star, or a Prodigy: So that it is worth the while to enquire into the Nature, and Philosophy of these Lights, (*though not the business of this Place*) that by discovering the Reason, we may overcome the Apprehension of them. There are many things which we  
know

know to Be, and yet we know nothing at all of what they Are. Is it not the Mind that Moves us, and Restreins us? But, What that Ruling Power is, we do no more understand, than Where it is. One will have it to be a Spirit : Another will have it to be a Divine Power : Some, only a Subtile Ayr; Others, an Incorporeal Being ; and some again will have it to be only Blood, and Heat. Nay, so far is the Mind from a Perfect understanding of Other things, that it is still in search of it Self. It is not long since we came to find out the Causes of Eclipses : And farther Experience will bring more things to Light, which are as yet in the Dark ; But, one Age is not sufficient for so many Discoveries. It must be the Work of Successions, and Posterity ; and the time will come, when we shall wonder that Mankind should be so long Ignorant of things, that lay so open, and so easie to be made Known. Truth is offer'd to all ; But we must yet content our selves with what's already found ; and leave some Truths to be retri'd by After Ages. The Exact truth of things is only known to God ; but, it is yet  
Lawful

Lawful for us to Enquire, and to Conjecture, though not with too much Confidence: Nor yet altogether without Hope. In the First place however, let us Learn things Necessary; and if we have any time to spare, we may apply it to Superfluities.

Why do we trouble our selves about things which Possibly May Happen, and peradventure, Not? Let us rather provide against those Dangers that Watch us, and lie in wait for us. To suffer Shipwrack, or to be Crush'd with the Ruin of a House, these are great Misfortunes, but they Seldom Happen. The Deadly, and the hourly danger that threatens Humane Life, is from One Man to Another. Other Calamities do Commonly give us Some Warning: The Smoak gives us notice of a Fire; the Clouds bid us provide for a Storm; but Humane Malice has no Prognostick; and the Nearer it is, the Fairer it Looks. There is no Trust to Countenances; we carry the Shapes of Men, and the Hearts of Beasts. Nay, we are worse than Beasts; for a Beast has only no Reason at all;

all; but the Other is Perverted, and turns his Reason to his Mischief. Beside that, all the Hurt which They do, is out of Fear, or Hunger; but Man takes delight in Destroying his Own Kind. From the Danger we are in from Men, we may Consider our Duty to Them; and take Care that we neither Do, nor Suffer Wrong. It is but Humane, to be Troubled at the Misfortunes of Another, and to Rejoyce at his Prosperity. And, it is likewise Prudent, to Bethink our selves what we are to Do, and what we are to Avoid: by which means we may keep our selves from being either Harm'd, or Deceiv'd. The things that most Provoke One Man to do Hurt to Another, are, Hope, Envy, Hatred, Fear, and Contempt: but, Contempt is the Slightest, Nay, many Men have betaken themselves to it for their Security. There is no doubt, but he that is Contemn'd, shall be Trod upon; but then his Enemy passes over him as not worth his Anger.

## EPIST. XIII.

*Every Man is the Artificer of his Own Fortune. Of Justice, and Injustice.*

**T**He short of the Question betwixt you and me, is This. *Whether a Man had better part with Himself, or something else that belongs to him?* And, it is Easily Resolv'd, in all Competitions betwixt the Goods of Sence, and Fortune; and those of Honor, and Conscience. Those things which all Men Covet, are but Specious Outfides; and there's nothing in them of Substantial Satisfaction. Nor is there any thing so Hard, and Terrible in the Contrary, as the Vulgar Imagine; only the word *Calamity*, has an Ill Reputation in the World: and the very *Name* is more Grievous than the *Thing it Self*. What have I to Complain of, if I can turn That to a Happiness, which others Count a Misery? A Wise Man either Repells, or Elects, as he sees the Matter

H before

before him; without Fearing the Ill which he Rejects, or Admiring what he Chuses. He is never Surpriz'd; but in the midst of Plenty he prepares for Poverty; as a Prudent Prince does for War, in the Depth of Peace. Our Condition is Good enough, if we make the Best on't; and our Felicity is in our own Power. *Things that are Adventitious, have no Effect upon him that Studies to make sure of his Happiness within Himself.* Every Man should stand upon his Guard against Fortune; and take most heed to himself, when she speaks him Fairest. All the Advantage she gets upon us, is at Unawares; whereas he that is Provided for her, and stands the First Shock, carries the Day. It is not with Common Accidents of Life, as with Fire, and Sword, that Burn, and Cut, all alike; but Misfortunes work more or less, according to the Weakness, or Resolution of the Patient. He that grieves for the Loss of Casual Comforts, shall never want Occasion of Sorrow. We say Commonly, *That every Man has his weak side:* But, give me leave to tell you, That he that  
Masters



Masters One Vice, may Master all the Rest. He that subdues Avarice, may Conquer Ambition. It is not for Philosophy to Excuse Vices. The Patient has little Hope of Health, when the Physitian prescribes Intemperance : Though I know, on the other side, that he that does any thing above the Ordinary, does but set up himself for a Mark to Malevolence, and Envy. Where Laws are Neglected, Corruptions must Inevitably be Introduc'd : for the Authority of Virtue is Shaken. And what are *Laws* but only *Precepts* mingled with *Threats* ? with This Difference, that the Former Deter us from Wickedness, and the Latter Advise us to Virtue. A Preamble, methinks, Derogates from the Honor of a Law, which ought to be Short, and Clear; and to Command, without Suffering any Expostulation. It is a Flat, and an Idle thing, a Law with a Prologue. Let me only be told my Duty, and I am not to *Dispute*, but to *Obej*.

If I have not acquitted my self of my Last Promise to you ; know, that in all Promises, there is a Tacite Reserve ;

*If I Can; If I Ought; or if things Continue in the same State:* So that by the Change of Circumstances, I am discharg'd of my Obligation. I know very well the Bonds of Justice; and yet the Practices of the World to the Contrary. There are no greater Exacters of Faith, than the Perfidious; no greater Persecuters of Falshood, than the Perjurious. He that loves his Neighbors Wife, and for that very Reason, because she is another Mans, Locks up his Own. The Wickedness of other Men we have alwayes in our Eye, but we cast our own over our Shoulders. A worse Father Chastises a Better Son: He that denies nothing to his Own Luxury, will Pardon Nothing in Another Mans. A Tyrant is offended at Blood-shed; the Sacrilegious Punishes Theft, and the greater part of the World Quarrels rather with the Offender, than with the Offence. It is very Rare, that either the Joy, or the Benefit of an Estate, Injuriouly gotten, continues Long. Men go together by the Ears about the Booty, and we pay dear for things of Little Value. We live and die, Lugging one another,

another, Breaking one anothers Rest, and our Lives are without Fruit, and without Pleasure. Justice is a Natural Principle. I must Live Thus with my Friend, Thus with my Fellow-Citizen, Thus with my Companion. And why? Because 'tis just; not for Design, or Reward: For it is Virtue it Self, and nothing Else, that pleases us. There is no Law Extant for keeping the Secrets of a Friend, or for not breaking Faith with an Enemy. And yet there's Just Cause of Complaint, if a Body betrayes a Trust. If a Wicked Man call upon me for Mony that I owe him; I'll make no Scruple of Pouring it into the Lap of a Common Prostitute, if she be appointed to Receive it. For my Business is to Return the Mony, not to Order him how he shall Dispose of it. I must pay it, upon Demand, to a Good Man, when it is Expedient; and to a Bad, when he Calls for't.

## EPIST. XIV.

*Of Trust in Friendship. Prayer ; and  
Bodily Exercise.*

There are some People, that if any thing goes Cross with them, though of a quality only fit for the Ear of a Friend ; out it goes at a Venture to the next Comer : Others again are so Suspicious, and so obstinately Close, that they will rather Perish, than trust the best Friend they have with it ; They are, Both of them, in the Wrong, only the One is the Better-natur'd Error, and the Other the Safer. Now, as to the Trust of a Friend : there are many Innocent things, which, in their Own Nature, may seem to be Privacies, and which Custom has ever Reputed So ; in which Cases, there is place enough for the Offices of Friendship, in the mutual Communication of our most Secret Cares, and Counsels. But yet we are so to govern our selves, that even an Enemy should not turn our Actions to Re-  
proach.

proach. For, an Honest Man lives not to the World, but to his own Conscience. There is a Certain Softness of Nature, and Spirit, that Steals upon a Man, and, like Wine, or Love, draws all things from him. No Man will either Conceal, or Tell, all that he Hears. But he that tells the Thing, will hardly conceal the Author: So that it passes from One to Another; and That which was at first a Secret, does presently become a Rumor. For This, and for many other Reasons, we should set a Watch upon our Lips; and attend the more useful, and necessary Work of Contemplation. The First Petition that we are to make to God Almighty, is for a *Good Conscience*: The Second, for *Health of Mind*; and Then, of *Body*. There are some things which we directly wish for, as Joy, Peace, and the like: Some that we Pray for, only in Case of Necessity: as Patience in Pain, or Sicknes, &c. Others, that Concern our External Behaviour, as Modesty of Countenance, Decency of Motion, and such a Demeanor, as may become a Prudent Man. Many things may be Commodious; that is to say,

they may be of more Use than Trouble; and yet not Simply Good. Some things we have for Exercise, others for Instruction, and Delight. These things belong to us only as we are *Men*, but not as we are *Good Men*. Some things serve to Correct, and Regulate our Manners; Others, to Enquire into the Nature, and Original of them. How shall we know what a Man is to do, if we do not search into his Nature, and find out what is best for him, and what he is to Avoid, and what to Pursue? Humanity not only keeps us from being Proud, and Covetous, but it makes us Affable, and Gentle, in our Words, Actions, and Affections. We have no Precepts from the *Liberal Arts*, neither for This, nor for Sincerity, Integrity of Manners, Modesty, Frugality; no nor for Clemency it self, That makes us as Tender of Anothers Blood, as of our Own, and distinguishes *Men in Society*, from *Beasts of Prey*. Some People are ever Complaining of the Iniquity of the Times: But, let no Man depend upon the Goodness of his Cause, but rather upon the Firmness of his Courage; there may be Force, or Bribery: I  
would



would hope the Best, but prepare for the Worst. What if I have serv'd an Ungrateful Interest, and suffer'd wrongfully? An Honest Man is more Troubled for the Injustice of a Severe Sentence, than for the Cruelty of it: and that his Country has done an Ill thing; rather than that he himself suffers it. If he be Banish'd, the shame is not His, but the Authors of it. He Tempers his Delights, and his Afflictions; and sayes to himself, That if our Joyes cannot be Long, neither will our Sorrows. He is Patient in his Own Misfortunes; without Envy at the Advantages of his Neighbor. His Virtue is Bolder, in the *Opposition* of Ill things, than Tyranny it self can be in the *Imposing* of them. This is rather to tell you what you do already, than what you should do. Goe on, as you have begun, and make haste to be Perfect: But take notice, that the Mind is to be now and then Unbent; a Glas of Wine, a Journey, a Mouthful of Fresh Ayre relieves it: But then there's a Difference betwixt a Remission, and a Dissolution. Without Exercise a Dull Tumor Invades us; and it is Remarkable,

able, that Men of Brawny Armes, and Broad Shoulders, have commonly Weak Souls. Some Exercises are short, and Gentle; and set the Body Right Presently. But, whatever we do, let us return quickly to the Mind; for That must not lie Idle. A little Labor serves it; and it works in all Seasons: in Summer, Winter, Old Age; Nothing hinders it. And, to make it more Valuable, it is every day better than Other. Not that I would have you perpetually Poring upon a Book neither; but allow your self seasonable Respites, and to't again. A Couch, or a Walk, does your Body Good; without Interrupting your Study: For you may Discourse, Dictate, Read, Hear, at the same time. Now though the Exercises be Laudable, and Healthful; yet the Masters of them are for the most part of Lewd Example. They divide their Lives betwixt the Tavern, and the Hot-house; and a Swingeing Debauch is a good dayes work with them. But, how apt we are to set Bounds to Others, and none to our Selves; and to Observe their Warts, when our own Bodies are  
Cover'd

Cover'd with Ulcers? What is more Ordinary, than for People to Reverence, and Detest the Fortunate, at the same time, even for Doing those things which they themselves would do, if they Could? There might be some Hope of our Amendment, if we would but Confess our Faults; as a Man must be awake that tells his Dream. There are some Diseases which are absolutely Hopeless, and past Cure; but they may yet be Palliated; and Philosophy, if it cannot help in One Case, it may in Another. To a Man in a Fever, a Gentle Remission is a Degree of Health, and it is something, if a Man be not perfectly sound, to be yet more Curable. But, we are loth to be at the Pains of Attending our Own business. We lead the Life in the World, that some Lazy People do in a Market, that stand gaping about them, without either Buying, or Selling. We slip o● Opportunities; and if they be not catch'd in the very *Nick*, they are Irrecoverably Lost.

## EPIST. XV.

*The Danger of Flattery; and in what Cases a Man may be allow'd to Commend himself.*

**D***Emetrius* was wont to say, That *Knavery* was the Ready way to *Riches*; and that the Casting off of *Virtue*, was the First Step to Thriving in the World. Study but the Art of *Flattery*, (which is now adays so acceptable, that a Moderate Commendation passes for a Libel.) Study That Art, (I say) and you shall do your Business, without Running any Risque upon the Seas, or any hazards of Merchandizing, Husbandry, or Suits at Law. There is not one Man of a Million that is Proof against an Artificial Flatterer; but something or other will Stick, if we do but give him the Hearing. Nay, we like him well enough, though we shake him off, and the Quarrel is easily Reconcil'd. We seem to Oppose him, but we do not shut the Door against him; or  
if

if we do, it is but as a Mistress will do some time upon her Servant, *She would be well enough content to be Hinder'd; and take it much better yet, to have it broke open.* Beside that, a Man lies Commonly most Open where he is attack'd. How shamefully are Great Men Fawn'd upon by their Slaves; and inur'd to Fulsome Praises? When the Only business of those, that call themselves Friends, is to try, who can most Dextrously deceive his Master. For want of knowing their own Strength, they believe themselves as Great, as their Parasites Represent them: And venture upon Broyles, and Wars, to their Irreparable Destruction. They break Alliances, and Transport themselves into Passions, which, for want of Better Counsels, hurry them on to Blood, and Confusion. They pursue every wild Imagination as a Certainty, and think it a greater Disgrace to be Bent, than to be Broken. They set up their Rest upon the Perpetuity of a Tottering Fortune, till they come at last to see the Ruin of themselves; and their Possessions; and too late, to Understand, that their Misfortunes, and their Flatteries

ries were of the same Date. There is a Sparing, and a Crafty Flattery, that looks like Plain-Dealing. But all Flatteries are words of Course; and he that Receives them will give them. Nay, let it be never so shameless, a Man takes all to himself, though his very Conscience gives him the Lye. Cruelty shall be Translated Mercy; Extortion and Oppression shall be called Liberality: Lust, and Gluttony, to the Highest Degree in the World, shall be magnify'd for Temperance. Now, What hope is there of his Changing for the Better, that values himself for the best of Men already? The stroke of an Arrow Convinc'd *Alexander*, that he was not the Son of *Jupiter*, but a Mortal Man. And thus, upon the Experiment of Humane Frailty, should every Man say to himself. Am not I sad sometimes, and tortur'd betwixt Hope and Fear? Do I not Hanker after Vain Pleasures? He that is not yet satisfy'd, is not so good as he should be. The words of Flatterers, and Parasites seldome Die in the Hearing; and when they have gain'd admittance, they grow more and more upon you; and



## EPISTLES.

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and shortly they'll tell you, that *Virtue*, *Philosophy*, and *Justice*, are but Empty Sounds. Let every Man Live while he may, and make the best of the Present: And not Govern himself at a rate, as if he were to keep a Diary for his Father. What Madness is it, to enrich a Man's Heir, and starve Himself; And to turn a Friend into an Enemy. For, his Joy will be proportion'd to what you leave him. Never trouble your self for these superfluous Censors of other Mens Lives, and Enemies of their Own. These Pedagogues of Mankind are not worth your Care. These are the People that draw us from our Parents, and Country, our Friends, and other Necessary Duties.

I would neither be deceiv'd my self, nor Deceive Others; but, if a Man cannot Live without it, let him Commend himself, and say thus. *I have Apply'd my Self to Liberal Studies, though both the Poverty of my Condition, and my own Reason, might rather have put me upon the Making of my Fortune. I have given Proof, that all Minds are Capable of Good-*  
ness;

refs; and I have Illustrated the Obscurity of my Family, by the Eminency of my Virtue. I have preserv'd my Faith in All Extremities: and I have ventur'd my Life for't. I have never Spoken one Word contrary to my Conscience, and I have been more Sollicitous for my Friend, than for my Self; I never made any Base submissions to any Man; and I have never done anything Unworthy of a Resolute, and of an Honest Man. My Mind is rais'd so much above all Dangers, that I have Master'd all Hazards; and I bless my self in the Providence which gave me that Experiment of my Virtue: For, it was not fit, methought, that so great a Glory should come Cheap. Nay, I did not so much as deliberate, whether Good Faith should suffer for Mee, or I for it. I stood my Ground, without laying violent hands upon my Self, to scape the Rage of the Powerful; though under Caligula I saw Cruelties, to such a Degree, that to be kill'd outright was accompted a Mercy. And yet I persisted in my Honesty, to shew, that I was ready to do more than Dye for't. My Mind was never Corrupted with Gifts, and when the humor of Avarice was at the height,

*I never laid my hand upon any Unlawful Gain, I have been Temperate in my Diet ; Modest in my Discourse ; Courteous and Affable to my Inferiors, And I have ever paid a Respect, and Reverence to my Betters.* After all ; what I have said, is either True, or False ; If True, I have Commended my self before a *Great Witness*, my own *Conscience* ; If False, I am Ridiculous, without any Witness at all. Let every Man retire into himself ; For the Old, the Young, Men, Women, and Children , they are all Wicked. Not every One only, or a Few, But there is a General Conspiracy in Evil. We should therefore Fly the World, withdraw into our Selves ; and in some sort avoid even our selves too.

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## EPIST. XVI.

*A General Dissolution of Manners;  
With a Censure of Corrupt Magi-  
strates?*

**T**He Corruption of the Present Times, is the General Complaint of all Times; It ever has been so, and it ever will be so: Not considering that the Wickedness of the World is always the same, as to the Degree of it; though it may Change Places perhaps, and vary a little in the Matter. One while Whoring is in Fashion; Another while Gluttony: To day, Excess in Apparel; and more care of the Body, than of the Mind: To morrow comes up the Humor of Scoffing; and after That, perchance, a Vein of Drinking; when he shall be accounted the Bravest Man, that makes himself the veriest Beast. This Prostitute Looseness of Manners, makes way for Sedition, and Cruelty. Under *Tiberius*, the Plague of your *Delatores*, or *Enformers*, was worse than any Civil War.

War. It was an Age, wherein the Words of Men, in their Cups; the most Innocent Railleries, and Ingenious Freedoms of Conversation, were made Capital. When it was Dangerous to be Honest, and only Profitable to be Viti-ous. And not only Ill Things, but Vice it self was both Commended, and Prefer'd: For all Insolencies, when they come to be Exemplary, they pretend to be Lawful. Authority in Sin, is an Incentive to it: And, it is at least an Excuse, if not a Warrant, to Transgress, after Great Example. Beside that, we are prone enough to do Amis, even of our Selves, without either a Leader, or a Companion. But, it is a Malevolent sort of Comfort, that which Men take in the Number of the Wicked.

The worst of all is This; that whereas in Other Cases the People are Asham'd of their Errors, in That of Life, they are Delighted with them, and so become Incurable. The Pilot takes no pleasure in Running upon a Rock; nor the Physician in the Death of his Patient; nor the Advocate in the Loss of his Clients

I 2 Cause.

Cause. But, on the other side, the Criminal Rejoyces in his Uncleanneſs, in his Ambition, and in his Theft; and never troubles himſelf for the Fault, but for the Miſcarriage. He makes Infamy the Reward of Lewdneſs, and values himſelf upon his Excellency in Ill-doing. The Queſtion is, who ſhall be moſt Impious; we have every day, Worſe Appetites, and Leſs Shame. Sobriety, and Conſcience, are become Fooliſh, and Scandalous things; and, it is half the Reliſh of our Luſts, that they are committed in the Face of the Sun. Innocency is not only Rare, but Loſt: And Mankind is enter'd into a Sort of Confederacy againſt Virtue. To ſay nothing of Inteſtine Wars; Fathers, and Sons, in League againſt one another; Poyſon'd Fountains, Troops in ſearch of the Banish'd, and Proſcrib'd, Priſons cram'd with Worthy Men, Cities Demoliſh'd; Rape, and Adultery Authoriz'd; Publick Perjuries, and Frauds; a Violation of Common Faith; and all the Bonds of Humane Society Cancell'd. *Adultery* is the ready way to *Wedlock*; and *Marriage*, to a *Single Life* again; For, *Parting*, is One Condition of it.



it. For, They Divorce; to Mary; and they Marry to be Divorc'd. That which they often talk, and hear of, they easily do. VVhat shame can there be of Incontinence, when Modesty is become a Reproach; and when it is the Mode for every Wife to provide her Self a Gallant or two, beside her Husband? 'Tis an Idle thing to think of ever converting those People, that find both Advantage, and Reputation in their VVickedness.

VVould any Man ever have Imagin'd, that *Clodius* should have come off by Bribery, for Debauching the VVife of *Cæsar*, and profaning the Publick Vows for the Safety of the People? But, the Judges were Corrupted; and not only with Mony, but with the Bodies of Young Men, and VVomen; So that his Absolution was fouler than his Crime; The *Bribe* was *Adultery*, as well as the *Offence*; and he had no way to be Safe, till he had made his Judges like himself. *Name the Woman you have a Mind to* (sayes he) *and you shall have her. And when you have Committed the Sin, Condemn it if you dare. Appoint the Time, and the Place, and she shall be ready for you;*

jon; Nay, the Practice was so gross, that  
 the Bench desir'd a Guard of the Senate,  
 to secure them from the People. Be-  
 fore the Sentence was given, he was an  
 Adulterer; in the Menage of the Cause,  
 he was a Pandar, and his way of Es-  
 caping Punishment, was Fouler than the  
 Offence that Deserv'd it. A Lust, that  
 spar'd not the Altar, and perverted Ju-  
 stice upon the very Seat of Judgment.  
 The Question was, *Whether any Adulter-*  
*er should scape Unpunish'd*; and the Re-  
 solution was; That, *without being an A-*  
*dulterer, he could not be secure.* Nor is  
 it likely, that their Conversation was  
 one Jote honefter than their Sentence:  
 These things have been done, and will  
 be done. Discipline, and Fear, may Re-  
 strain the Licence of the People, but, it  
 is not to be thought, that they will ever  
 be Good of their own Accord. But,  
 let us not yet speak of Luxury, and Dis-  
 solution, as the Vices of the Age, which,  
 in truth, are only the Vices of the Men.  
 The Practices of our times are Moderate,  
 compar'd with those, when the Delin-  
 quent pleaded *Not Guilty* to the Bench,  
 and the Bench confess'd it self *Guilty* to  
 the

the Delinquent; and when one Adultery was excus'd by Another. In those dayes it pass'd for Great Piety, not to be very Impious. He that Gave most, Carry'd the Cause; and 'tis but according to the Laws of Nations, for him that Buys, to Sell. And, it is to be Noted, that a Man may be as Covetous of Getting, what he intends to squander away, as if he were to hoard it up. The Contempt of Poverty in Others, and the Fear of it in our Selves. Unmerciful Oppressions, and Mercenary Magistrates, are the Common Grievances of a Licentious Government. The Baths, and the Theatres, are Crowded, when the Temples, and the Schools are Empty; for Men mind their Pleasures, more than their Manners. All Vices gain upon us by the Promise of Reward; Avarice Promises Mony; Luxury Sensual Satisfactions; Ambition promises Preferment, and Power. And it is no excuse to say, that a Man is not Very Covetous; a Little Ambitious, Cholerick, Inconstant, Lustful; and the Like. He had better have one Great Vice, than a Spice of all Little ones. We say Commonly, that a

Fool has all Sorts of Vices in him; that is to say, he is Free from none: But they do not all Appear; and he is more Prone to One, than to Another. One is given to Avarice; Another to Luxury; a Third to Wantonness; But we are not yet to ask the *Stoicks*, if *Achilles* be a Coward; *Aristides*, Unjust; *Fabius*, Rash; *Mucius*, a Traitor; *Camillus*, a Deserter. We do not say, that all Vices are in all Men, as some are in Some Particulars.

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## EPIST. XVII.

*The Original of all Men, is the Same ;  
and Virtue is the only Nobility.  
There is a Tendernefs due to Ser-  
vants.*

**I**T is not well done, to be still murmur-  
ing against Nature, and Fortune, as if  
it were Their Unkindness that makes  
You Inconsiderable, when it is only by  
your Own Weakness that you make  
your self So : For it is Virtue, not Pe-  
degree, that renders a Man either Valu-  
able, or Happy. Philosophy does not  
either Reject, or Chuse any Man for his  
Quality. *Socrates* was no *Patrician* ;  
*Cleanthes*, but an *Under Gardener* ; Nei-  
ther did *Plato* Dignify Philosophy by  
his Birth, but by his Goodness. All these  
Worthy Men are our *Progenitors* ; if we  
will but do our selves the Honor to be-  
come their *Disciples*. The Original of  
all Mankind was the Same ; and, it is on-  
ly a Clear Conscience, that makes any  
Man *Noble* : For, That derives even  
from

from Heaven it self. It is the Saying of a Great Man, That if we could trace our Descents, we should find all Slaves to come from Princes, and all Princes from Slaves. But Fortune has turn'd all things Topsy-Turvy, in a long Story of Revolutions. It is most Certain, that our Beginning had nothing Before it; and our Ancestors were some of them Splendid, others Sordid, as it happen'd. We have lost the Memorials of our Extraction, and, in truth, it matters not whence we Came, but whither we Goe. Nor is it any more to our Honor, the Glory of our Predecessors, than it is to Their Shame, the Wickedness of their Posterity. VVe are all of us compos'd of the Same Elements; why should we then value our selves upon our Nobility of Blood, as if we were not all of us Equal, if we could but recover our Evidence? But, when we can carry it no farther, the *Herald* provides us some *Hero* to supply the Place of an Illustrious Original; and there's the Rise of Armies, and Families. For a Man to spend his Life in pursuit of a Title, that serves only when he dies, to furnish out an  
*Epitaph,*



*Epitaph*, is below a Wise Mans Business.

It pleases me Exceedingly, to understand by all that come out of your Quarters, that you demean your self humanely, and tenderly toward your Servants. It is the Part of a Wise, and of a Good Man, to deal with his Inferior, as he would have his Superior deal with him: For Servants are not only Men, but a kind of Humble Friends; and Fortune has no more Power over Them, than over their Masters: And he that duely considers, how many Servants have come to be Masters, and how many Masters to be Servants, will lay no great Stress of Argument, either upon the One, or upon the Other. Some use their Servants worse than Beasts, in Slavish Attendants, betwixt their Drink, and their Lusts; Some are brought up only to Carve, others to Season; and all to serve the Turns of Pomp, and Luxury. Is it not a Barbarous Custome, to make it almost Capital, for a Servant only to Cough, Sneeze, Sigh, or but wag his Lips, while he is in waiting; and, to keep him the whole

whole Night, Mute, and Fasting? Yet so it comes to pass, that they that dare not speak *Before* their Masters, will not forbear talking *Of* them; and those, on the other side, that were allow'd a modest Freedom of Speech in their Masters Entertainments, were most obstinately silent upon the Torture, rather than they would betray them. But we live, as if a Servant were not made of the same Materials with his Master, or to Breathe the same Air, or to Live, and Dye, under the Same Conditions. It is worthy of Observation, that the most Imperious Masters over their own Servants, are, at the same time, the most Abject Slaves to the Servants of other Masters. I will not distinguish a Servant by his Office, but by his Manners: The One is the work of Fortune, the Other of Virtue. But, we look only to his Quality, and not to his Merit. Why should not a Brave Action rather Dignify the Condition of a Servant, than the Condition of a Servant Lessen a Brave Action? I would not value a Man for his Cloaths, or Degree, any more than I would do a Horse for his Trappings. What if he be a Servant?

vant? shew me any Man that is not so; to his Lusts, his Avarice, his Ambition, his Palate, to his Quean; nay, to other Mens Servants; and we are all of us Servants to *Fear*: Insolent we are, many of us, at Home; Servile, and Despised Abroad; and none are more Liable to be trampled upon, than those that have gotten a habit of Giving Affronts, by Suffering them. What matters it how many Masters we have, When 'tis but One Slavery? And, whosoever Contemns That, is perfectly Free, let his Masters be never so Many. That Man is only Free, not whom Fortune has a *Little* Power over, but over whom she has *none at all*: Which State of Liberty is an Inestimable Good, when we desire Nothing, that is either Superfluous, or Vicious. They are Asses that are made for Burthen, and not the Nobler sort of Horses. In the Civil Wars betwixt *Cæsar*, and *Pompey*, the Question was not, who should be Slaves, or Free, but who should be Master. Ambition is the same thing in Private, that it is in Publick; and the Duties are Effectually the same, betwixt the Master of a Kingdom, and the Master of

a Family. As I would treat some Servants kindly, Because they are Worthy; and Others, to make them so; so on the Other side, I would have a Servant to Reverence his Master; and rather to Love him, than Fear him. Some there are, that think this too little for a Master, though it is all that we pay even to God himself. The Body of a servant may be bought, and sold; but his Mind is Free.

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EPIST. XVIII.

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## EPIST. XVIII.

*We are Juster to Men, than to God:  
Of Life, and Death, of Good, and  
Evil.*

**I**T is without Dispute, that the Loss of a Friend is one of the greatest Tryals of Humane Frailty; and no Man is so much exalted above the sense of that Calamity, as not to be affected with it. And yet if a Man bears it Bravely, they cry, *he has no Sense of Piety, or Good Nature in him*; if he sink under it, they call him Effeminate: so that he lies both wayes under a Reproach. But, What's the Ground of your Trouble, I beseech you, but that *he might have Liv'd Longer, in respect of his years*; and, in effect, *that he ought to have done so, in regard of his Usefulness to the World*? I cannot but wonder to see, that a Person so Just, and so Temperate in all his Dealings with Men, and in Business, should so exceedingly forget himself in This Point. But you have in Excuse of this Error, the Failings

Failings of the whole VWorld with you for Company. For even those that are the most scrupulously Consciencious toward Men, are yet Unthankful, and Injurious to Providence.

It is not the Number of Dayes that makes a Life Long, but the Full Employment of them, upon the main End, and Purpose of Life ; which is, the Perfecting of the Mind, in making a Man the Absolute Master of Himself. I reckon the Matter of Age among External things, the main point is to Live, and Die, with Honor. Every Man that Lives, is upon the way, and must go through with his Journey, without stopping, till he comes at the End : And wheresoever it ends, if it ends well, it is a Perfect Life. There is an Invincible Fate, that attends all Mortals ; and, one Generation is condemn'd to tread upon the Heels of another. Take away from Life, the Power of Death, and 'tis a slavery. As *Caligula* was passing upon the way, an Old man that was a Prisoner, and with a Beard down to his Girdle, made it his request to *Cæsar*, that he might be put to death. *Why*, sayes *Cæsar*.



*Cæsar* to him, *are you not dead already?*  
So that you see Some Desire it, as well  
as others Fear it: And why not? When  
it is one of the Duties of Life, to Dye.  
And it is one of the Comforts of it too:  
For the Living are under the Power of  
Fortune, but she has no Dominion at  
all over the Dead. How can Life be  
Pleasant to any Man, that is not pre-  
par'd to part with it? Or what Loss can  
be easier to us, than that which can ne-  
ver be Miss'd; or Desir'd again? I was  
brought by a Defluxion into a hopeless  
Consumption; and I had it many times  
in my Thought to Deliver my self from  
a Miserable Life, by a Violent Death.  
But the Tenderness I had for an Aged,  
and Indulgent Father, held my hand; for,  
thought I to my self, it will be very hard  
for my Father to be without me, though  
I could most willingly part with my  
self. In the Case of a Particular Disease,  
a Physitian may propound a Remedy;  
but the onely Remedy for all Diseases, is  
the Contempt of Death. (Though I  
know too, that it is the business of a  
Long Life, to Learn That Lesson.)

Oh! The Happiness of distinguishing Good from Evil, in the Works of Providence! But, in stead of raising our Thoughts to the Contemplation of Divine Matters, and enquiring into the Original, the State, and the Appointed Issue of Created Nature; we are digging of the Earth; and serving of our Avarice; Neglecting all the good things that are so frankly offer'd us. How great a Folly and Madness is it, for Men that are Dying, and in the hands of Death already, to extend their Hopes, and to carry their Ambition, and Desires to the Grave, Unsatisfy'd? For, whosoever is tainted with those Hydroptick Appetites, can never have enough, either of Mony, or Power. It is a Remarkable thing, that among those that place their Happiness in Sense, they are the most miserable that seem to be happiest. The Riches of Nature are the most precious Treasures. What has any Man to desire more, than to keep himself from Cold, Hunger, and Thirst? It is not the Quantity, but the Opinion, that Governs in this Case; *That can never be Little, which*

*is Enough: Nor does any Man accompt That to be Much, which is too Little.* The Benefits of Fortune are so far Comfortable to us, as we enjoy them without losing the Possession of our selves. Let us Purge our Minds, and follow Nature; we shall otherwise be still either Fearing, or Craving, and Slaves to Accidents. Not that there is any Pleasure in Poverty; but it is a great Felicity for a Man to bring his Mind to be contented even in That State, which Fortune it self cannot make worse. Methinks our Quarrels with Ambition, and Profitable Employments, are somewhat like those we have with our Mistresses; we do not Hate them, but Wrangle with them. In a word; betwixt those things which are Sought, and Coveted, and yet Complain'd of; and those things which we have Lost, and pretend that we cannot live without, our Misfortunes are purely Voluntary: and we are Servants, not so much by Necessity, as by Choice. No Man can be Happy, that is not Free, and Fearless: And no Man can be so, but he, that by Philosophy has got the better of Fortune. In what Place soever

we are ; we shall find our selves beset with the Miseries of Humane Nature : Some, Without us ; that either Encompass us, Deceive us, or Force us : Others, Within us ; that eat up our very Hearts, in the Middle of Solitude. And it is not yet, as we imagine, that Fortune has Long Armes ; She meddles with no body, that does not first lay hold upon Her. We should keep a Distance therefore, and withdraw into the Knowledge of Nature, and of our Selves. We Understand the Original of things ; the Order of the World, the Circulation of the Seasons, the Courses of the Stars, and that the whole Frame of the Universe (only the Earth excepted) is but a Perpetual Motion. We know the Causes of Day, and Night ; of Light, and of Darknes ; but it is at a distance : Let us direct our Thoughts then to That Place, where we shall see all nearer Hand. And, it is not This Hope neither, that makes a Wise Man Resolute at the Point of Death, because Death lies in his way to Heaven ; For, the Soul of a Wise Man is there before-hand : Nay, if there were nothing after Death, to be  
either

either Expected, or Fear'd, he would yet leave this World with as great a Mind, though he were to pass into a State of Annihilation. He that reckons every hour his Last; a Day, or an Age, is all one to him. Fate is doing our Work while we Sleep; Death steals upon us Insensibly; and the more Insensibly, because it passes under the name of Life. From Childhood we grow up, without perceiving it, to Old Age; and this Encrease of our Life, duely consider'd, is a Diminution of it. We take Death to be Before us; but it is Behind us; and has already swallow'd up all that is past. Wherefore, make use of the Present; and trust nothing to the Morrow; for Delay is just so much time lost. We catch hold of Hopes, and Flatteries, of a little longer Life; as Drowning Men do upon Thorns, or Straws, that either Hurt us, or Deceive us. You will ask, perhaps, what I do my Self, that Preach at this Rate. Truly I do like some ill Husbands, that spend their Estates, and yet keep their Accompts: I run out; but yet I can tell which way it goes. And,

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I have the Fate of Ill Husbands too, another way; for every Body Pitties me, and no Body Helps me. The Soul is never in the Right place, so long as it fears to quit the Body. Why should a Man trouble himself to extend Life, which, at Best, is a kind of Punishment; And, at Longest, amounts to very little more, than Nothing? He is Ungrateful, that takes the Period of Pleasure for an Injury; and he is Foolish, that knows no Good, but the Present. Nay, there are some Courses of Life, which a Man ought to quit, though with Life it self: As the Trade of Killing Others, in stead of Learning to Dye, Himself. Life it self is neither Good, nor Evil; but only a Place for Good, and Evil. It is a kind of Trage-Comedy. Let it be well Acted, and no matter whether it be Long, or Short. We are apt to be misled by the Appearances of things; and when they come to us, recommended in Good Terms, and by Great Example, they will impose many times upon very Wise Men. The Mind is never Right; but when it is at peace within



within it self, and Independent upon any thing from Abroad. The Soul is in Heaven, even while it is in the Flesh; if it be purg'd of Natural Corruptions, and taken up with Divine Thoughts: And, whether any body sees us, or takes notice of us, it matters not. Virtue will of it self break forth, though never so much pains be taken to suppress it. And it is all one, whether it be known, or no: But After Ages however will do us Right; when we are Dead, and Insensible of the Veneration they allow us. He that is wise, will compute the Conditions of Humanity; and contract the Subject both of his Joyes, and Fears. And it is time well spent, so to Abate of the One, that he may likewise Diminish the Other. By this Practice he will come to understand, how short, how uncertain, and how safe, many of those things are, which we are wont to Fear. When I see a Splendid House, or a glittering Train, I look upon it, as I do upon Courts, which are only the Schools of Avarice, and Ambition; and they are at best but a Pompe, which is more for

Shew, than Possession. Beside that,  
Great Goods are seldome Long-liv'd;  
and That is the Fairest Felicity, which  
is of the shortest Growth.

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EPIST. XIX.

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## EPIST. XIX.

*Of True Courage.*

**F**ortitude is (properly) the Contempt of all Hazards, according to Reason; though it be commonly, and promiscuously used also, for, a Contempt of all Hazards, even Without, or Against Reason: Which is rather a Daring, and a Brutal Fierceness, than an Honorable Courage. A Brave Man fears Nothing more than the Weakness of being affected with Popular Glory. His Eyes are not Dazled, either with Gold, or Steel; he tramples upon all the Terrors, and Glories of Fortune; he looks upon himself as a Citizen, and Soldier of the World, and, in despite of all Accidents, and Oppositions, he maintains his Station. He does not only Suffer, but Court the most Perilous Occasions of Virtue, and those Adventures which are most Terrible to Others: for he values himself upon Experiment; and is more Ambitious of being reputed Good, than Happy.

Happy. *Mucius* Lost his hand with more Honor, than he could have Preserv'd it: He was a greater Conqueror Without it, than he could have been With it: For with the very Stump of it, he overcame two Kings, *Tarquin*, and *Porfenna*. *Rutelia* follow'd *Cotta* into Banishment; she stay'd, and she return'd with him too; and soon after, she Lost him, without so much as shedding a Tear: a Great Instance of her Courage, in his Banishment, and of her Prudence, in his Death. This (sayes *Epicurus*) is the Last, and the Blessed'st day of my Life; when he was ready to Expire in an extreme torment of the Stone. It is never said of the 300 *Fabii*, that they were Overcome, but that they were Slain; Nor of *Regulus*, that he was Vanquish'd by the *Carthaginians*, but that he was Taken. The *Spartans* prohibited all Exercises where the Victory was declar'd by the Voice, and Submission, of him that was worsted. When *Phaeton* begg'd of *Phæbus* the Government of the Chariot of the Sun for one day, the Poet makes him so far from being Discouraged by his Fathers telling him of the Danger of the Undertaking, and

and how he himself had much adoe to keep his Seat for Fear, when he look'd down from the Meridian, that it prov'd a Spur to his Importunity. *That's the thing* (sayes Phaeton) *that I would be at; to stand Firm in That difficulty, where Phœbus himself Trembles.* Security is the Caution of Narrow Minds. But, as Fire tries Gold, so does Difficulty, and Hazard try Virtuous Men. Not but that he may be as Valiant that Watches upon the Tower as he that fights upon his Knees; only the One has had the good Fortune of an Occasion for the Proof of his Resolution. As some Creatures are Cruel; Others Crafty, and some Timorous; so Man is endu'd with a Glorious, and an Excellent Spirit, that prompts him, not so much to regard a Safe Life, as an Honest. Providence has made him the Master of this Lower World; and he reckons it his Duty to Sacrifice his Own Particular to the Advantage of the Whole. And yet there is a vast Difference, even in the same Action done by a Brave Person, and by a Stupid: as the Death of  
*Cato,*

*Cato* was Honorable; but that of *Brutus* was Shameful. Nor is it Death it self that we recommend for Glorious; but it is a glorious thing to Dye as we Ought. Neither is it Poverty, Banishment, or Pain, that we commend; but the Man that behaves himself Bravely under those Afflictions. How were the Gladiators Contemn'd, that call'd for Quarter? And those on the other side Favour'd, that Despis'd it. Many a Man saves his Life, by not fearing to Lose it; and, Many a Man Loses his Life, for being over-sollicitous to save it. We are many times afraid of Dying by One thing, and we come to Dye by Another. As for Example; we are Threatned by an Enemy, and we Dye by a Pleurisie. The Fear of Death enlarges all other things that we Fear. To Bear it with Constancy, we should Compute, that whether our Lives be long, or short, it comes all to a Point; Some Hours we lose: What if they were Dayes, Months, Years? What matters it if I never Arrive at that which I must certainly Part with when I have it.



it. Life is but one Point of Flying Time; and, that which is to come, is no more Mine, than that which is Past. And, we have this for our Comfort too, that whosoever now Fears Death, will, some time or other come to Wish it. If Death be Troublesome, or Terrible; the Fault is in us, and not in Death it self. It is as great a Madnes for a Man to Fear that which he is not to Feel, as that which he is not to Suffer. The Difference lies in the Manner of Dying, and not in the Issue of Death it Self. 'Tis a more Inglorious Death to be Smother'd with Perfumes, than to be torn to pieces with Pincers. Provided my Mind be not Sick, I shall not much heed my Body. I am Prepar'd for my last Hour, without tormenting my self when it will come. It is betwixt the *Stoicks* and *other Philosophers*, as betwixt Men, and Women. They are Both, Equally, Necessary for Society; only the one is Born for Government, and the other for Subjection. Other Sects deal with their Disciples, as Plausible Physitians do with their Patients;

tients; they Flatter, and Humor them;  
whereas the *Stoicks* go a Bolder way to  
work; and consider rather their Profit,  
than their Pleasure.

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EPIST. XX.

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## EPIST. XX.

*'Tis never too Late to Learn. The Advantages of a Private Life; and the Slavery of a Publick. The Ends of Punishment.*

**L**Et no Mañ presume to advise Others, that has not first given Good Counsel to himself: And he may, Then, pretend to help his Neighbor. It is, in short, as hard a matter to Give Good Counsel, as to Take it: Let it however be agreed, betwixt the Two Parties, that the One designs to Confer a Benefit, and the Other, to Receive it. Some People Scorn to be Taught: Others are Asham'd of it, as they would be of going to School when they are Old: But, it is never too late to Learn, what it is alwayes Necessary to Know; And, it is no Shame to Learn, so long as we are Ignorant; that is to say, so long as we Live. When any thing is Amis in our Bodies, or Estates, we have Recourse presently to the Physician, or the Lawyer, for Help: And why

why not to the Philosopher in the Disorders of our Mind? No Man *Lives*, but he that applies himself to *Wisdom*; for he takes into his own Life the Supplement of all Past Ages. 'Tis a Fair Step toward Happiness, and Virtue, to Delight in the Conversation of Good, and of Wise Men: And where That cannot be had, the next point is, to keep no Company at all. Solitude affords Business enough; and the Entertainment is Comfortable, and Easie. Whereas Publick Offices are Vexatious, and Restless. There's a great Difference betwixt a Life of Leisure, and of Lazyness. When People will Express their Envy of a Man in a Happy Condition; they'll say, *He lives at his Ease*. When, in truth, the Man is *Dead*; *Alive*. There is a *Long Life*, and there is a *Long Death*: The Former, when we enjoy the Benefits of a Right Mind; and the Other, when the Senses are Extinguish'd; and the Body Dead before-hand. He that makes me the Master of my Own Time, and places me in a State of Freedom, layes a great Obligation upon me. As a Merchant, that has a Considerable Fortune

Fortune Aboard, is more sensible of the Blessing of a Fair Wind, and a Safe Passage, than he that has only Ballast, or some Course Commodity in the Vessel: So, That Man that employes his Privacy upon Thoughts Divine, and Precious, is more sensible of the Comfort of that Freedom, than he that bends his Meditations an Ill way. For, he considers all the Benefits of his Exemption from Common Duties, he enjoys himself with Infinite Delight, and makes his Gratitude Answerable to his Obligations. He is the best of Subjects, and the Happiest of Men; and he lives to Nature, and to himself. Most Men are to Themselves, the worst Company they can keep. If they be Good, Quiet, and Temperate, they are as good Alone, as in Company: But, if otherwise, let them converse with Others, and Avoid themselves: But, he that has made himself good Company, can never be too much alone. Many a Ship is lost in the Harbor, but more in the Ocean; as many an Honest Man is Condemn'd, but more Guilty. This however, is Cer-

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tain,

tain. He that cannot secure himself in Privacy, shall be much more expos'd in Publick. That which the World calls Felicity, is Greedy, it Self, and expos'd to the Greediness of Others. Prosperity, like a Fair Gale upon a Strong Current, carries a Man, in a Trice, out of the very sight of Peace, and Quiet; and if it be not Temper'd, and Regulated, it is so far from Easing us, that it proves an Oppression to us. A busie, and a Fortunate Man in the World, calls many Men his Friends, that are at most but his Guests. And, if People flock to it, 'tis but as they do to a Fountain, which they both exhaust, and trouble.

What greater slavery can there be, than that of Princes, in this very Respect, that they are Chain'd to their Post; and cannot make themselves less: All their Words, and Actions are descanted upon, and made Publick Discourse; and there are many things allowable to a Private Man, that are not fit for a Governor. I can walk Alone, where I please; without a Sword, without



out Fear, and without Company: whereas a Prince must be Armed in Peace, and cannot, with Dignity, quit his Guards. Fortune has him in Custody. A Train besets him wherever he goes; and there's no making of an Escape. He is little better than nail'd to his Place, and it is the Perfection of his Misery, that he cannot go less. He can no more Conceal himself, than the Sun in the Firmament; whereas his Subjects may Go and Come, change Habits, and Humor, without being taken Notice of. Servitude is the Fate of Palaces. The Splendor of a Crown draws all Mens Eyes upon it. When *Cæsar* speaks, the whole World hears his Voice, and trembles at his Displeasure; and where it falls, it shakes whatsoever is near it. His Lips are the Oracles of the People; and Government is the Cement that Binds them together. But still he that is Master of Many, is the Servant yet of More. The Power, 'tis true, of all things, belongs to the *Prince*; but the Propriety to Particular Persons. And the same thing may be both Yours,

and mine, in Several Respects. We cannot say that a Son, or a Servant has Nothing, because a master, or a father may take it away if he will; or that he cannot Give Willingly, because they may hinder it; whether he will, or no. *This is Power, and true Dominion, not to Rule, and Command, when we may do it if we please.* The Strength of a Prince is in the Love of his People; For there is nothing so great, but it must it self perish, when it is become the Common Safety that it should be so. Tyrants are Hated, because they are Fear'd; and because they are Hated, they will be Fear'd. They are render'd Odious to Posterity; and they had better never have been born, than to stand upon Record for the Plagues of Mankind. Miserable is that People, where their very Keepers are their Executioners. And, it is not an Armed Tyranny neither, but the Unarmed Vices of Avarice, and Envy, that we ought to be most afraid of. Some will not endure to have their Vices touch'd, but will shrink, and struggle under the Operation,

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tion, as if they were under the hand of a Surgeon. But, this shall not hinder me from Lancing, and Probing; because of the Cries, and Groans of the Patient. Every Man should have a *Monitor* at his Elbow, to keep him from Avarice, by showing him how Rich a Man may be with a Little: From Ambition, by representing the Disquiets, and Hazards that accompany Greatness; which makes him as great a Burthen to Others, as he is to Himself. When it comes to That once; Fear, Anxiety, and Weariness, make us Philosophers. A Sickly Fortune produces wholesome Counsels; and we reap this Fruit from our Adversity, that it brings us at last to Wisdom.

Now, though Clemency in a Prince be so necessary, and so Profitable a Virtue; and Cruelty so dangerous an Excess; it is yet the Office of a Governor, as of the Master of an Hospital, to keep Sick, and Mad Men in Order. And, in Cases of Extremity, the very Member is to be cut off with the Ulcer. All Punishment

nishment is either for Amendment, or for Example, or that Others may live more Secure. What is the End of Destroying those Poysonous, and Dangerous Creatures, which are never to be reclaim'd, but to prevent Mischief? And yet there may be as much Hazard in doing too Much, as too Little. A Particular Mutineer may be punished; but when the whole Army is in a Revolt, there must be a General Pardon. The Multitude of Offenders, is their Security, and Protection: For there's no Quarrelling with a Publick Vice, where the Custom of Offending takes away the Shame of it; and it is not Prudent neither, by many Punishments, to shew a City, that the Wicked are so much the Major Part: Beside that, it is as great a Dishonor for a *Prince* to have many Executions, as for a *Physitian* to have many Funerals. Shall a Father Disinherit a Son for the First Offence? Let him first Admonish, then Threaten, and afterward Punish him. So long as there is Hope, we should apply gentle Remedies. But, some Nations

ons are Intractable, and neither Willing to Serve, nor Fit to Command; And, some Persons are Incorrigible too.

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**L 4      EPIST. XXI.**

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## EPIST. XXI,

*The Two Blessings of Life are, a Sound Body; and a Quiet Mind. The Extravagance of the Roman Luxury. The Moderation, and Simplicity of Former Times.*

**E** *Picurus* makes the Two Blessings of Life, to be a *Sound Body*, and a *Quiet Mind*: Which is only a Compendious Reduction of Humane Felicity to a State of *Health*, and of *Virtue*. The way to be Happy is to make Vice, not only Odious, but Ridiculous; and every Man to mind his own Business; for he that Torments himself for other Peoples Misfortunes, shall never be at Rest. A Virtuous Life must be all of a Piece; and not advance by Starts, and Intervals; and then to go on where it Left; for this is Losing of Ground. We are to press, and persevere, for the main difficulties are yet to come. If I discontinue my Course, when shall I come to pronounce these words? *I am a Conqueror*:



ror: Not a Conqueror of Barbarous Enemies, and Salvage Nations; but I have subdu'd Avarice, Ambition, and those Lusts, that have subjected even the greatest of Conquerors. Who was a Greater than *Alexander*? that extended his Empire from *Thracia*, to the Utmost bounds of the *East*: But yet he Burnt *Persopolis* at the request of a *Prostitute*, to gratifie his *Lust*. He overcame *Darius*, and slew many Thousands of the *Persians*; but yet he Murther'd *Calisthenes*. And that single Blot has Ternish'd all the Glory of all his Victories. All the wishes of Mortals, and all the Benefits which we can either Give, or Receive, are of very little Conducement to a Happy Life. Those things which the Common People gape after, are Transitory and Vain. Whereas Happiness is Permanent; Nor is it to be Estimated by Number, Measure, or Parts: For it is Full, and Perfect. I do not speak, as if I myself were arriv'd at that Blessed State of Repose: But, it is something yet to be on the Mending hand. It is with me, as with a Man that's Creeping out of a Disease; he Feels yet some Grudgings of it,

it, he is every Foot Examining of his Pulse ; and suspects every Touch of Heat to be a Relick of his Feaver. Just at That rate, am I jealous of my self. The best Remedy that I know in this Case, is to go on with Confidence, and not to be misled by the Errors of Other People. It is with our Manners, as with our Healths; 'tis a Degree of Virtue, the Abatement of Vice, as it is a Degree of Health, the Abatement of a Fit.

Some Place their Happiness in Wealth; Some in the Liberty of the Body ; and Others in the Pleasures of the Sense, and Palate. But, What are Mettals, Tasts, Sounds, or Colours, to the Mind of a Reasonable Creature? He that sets his Heart upon Riches, the very Fear of Poverty will be grievous to him. He that's Ambitious, shall be gall'd with Envy at any Man that gets before him : For, in that Case, he that is not First , is Last. I do not speak against Riches neither : For if they hurt a Man, 'tis his Own Folly. They may be indeed the Cause of Mischief ; as they are a Temptation to those that do it. In stead of Courage, they may Inspire us with Arrogance ; and, in  
stead

stead of Greatness of Mind, with Insolence; which is in truth but the Counterfeit of Magnanimity. What is it to be a Prisoner, and in Chains? It is no more than that Condition to which many Princes have been Reduc'd; and out of which, Many Men have been Advanc'd to the Authority of Princes. 'Tis not to say, *I have no Master*; In time you may have one. Might not *Hecuba*, *Cræsus*, and the Mother of *Darius* have said as much? And where's the Happiness of Luxury either; when a Man divides his Life betwixt the Kitchen, and the Stews; betwixt an Anxious Conscience, and a Nauseous Stomach? *Caligula*, who was born to shew the World what mischief might be done by a Concurrence of Great Wickedness, and a Great Fortune. Spent near 10000*l.* Sterling upon a Supper. The Works, and Inventions of it are Prodigious, not only in the Counterfeiting of Nature, but even in Surpassing it. The *Romans* had their Brooks even in their Parlors; and found their Dinners under their Tables. The *Mullet* was reckon'd stale, unless it dy'd in the Hand of the Guest:

And

And they had their Glasses to put them into, that they might the better observe all the Changes, and Motions of them in the Last Agony betwixt Life, and Death. So that they fed their Eyes, before their Bodies. *Look how it Reddens, sayes one, there's no Vermilion like it. Take notice of these Veins; and that same grey brightness upon the Head of it. And now he is at's Last Gasp: See how Pale he turns, and all of a Colour.* These people would not have given themselves half this trouble with a Dying Friend; Nay, they would leave a Father, or a Brother, at his Last Hour, to entertain themselves with the Barbarous Spectacle of an expiring Fish. And that which enhances the Esteem of every thing, is the Price of it: Insomuch, that Water it self, which ought to be Gratuitous, is expos'd to Sale, in their Conservatories of Ice, and Snow. Nay, we are troubled that we cannot buy Breath, Light; and that we have the Air it self *Gratis*. As if our Condition were Evil, because Nature has left something to us in Common. But Luxury contrives wayes to set a Price upon the most Necessary, and Com-

Communicable Benefits in Nature: Even those Benefits, which are Free to Birds, and Beasts, as well as to Men; and serve Indifferently for the Use of the most Sluggish Creatures. But, How comes it that Fountain Water is not Cold enough to Serve us, unless it be bound up into Ice? So long as the Stomach is Sound, Nature discharges her Functions without Trouble: But, when the Blood comes to be inflam'd with Excess of Wine, or Meats, Simple Water is not Cold Enough to Allay that Heat; and we are forc'd to make use of Remedies, which Remedies themselves are Vices. We heap Suppers upon Dinners, and Dinners upon Suppers, without Intermision. Good God! How easie is it to quench a Sound, and an Honest Thirst? But, when the Palate is grown Callous, we Taste nothing; and that which we take for Thirst, is only the Rage of a Feaver. *Hippocrates* deliver'd it as an *Aphorisme*, that *Women were never Ball'd, nor Gouty, but in one Singular Case*. Women have not alter'd their Natures since, but they have Chang'd the Course of their Lives; for, by taking the Liberties



ties of Men, they partake as well of their Diseases, as of their Wickedness. They sit up as much, Drink as much ; nay, in their very Appetites they are Masculine too ; they have lost the Advantages of their Sex, by their Vices.

Our Ancestors, when they were Free, liv'd either in Caves, or in Arbours : But Slavery came in with Gildings, and with Marble. I would have him that comes into my House, take more Notice of the Master, then of the Furniture. The Golden Age was before Architecture : Arts came in with Luxury, and we do not hear of any Philosopher that was either a Locksmith, or a Painter. Who was the Wiser Man, think you ? he that Invented a Saw, or the Other ; who, upon seeing a Boy drink Water out of the Hollow of his Hand, Brake his Pitcher : with this Check to himself, *What a Fool am I to trouble my self with Superstitions ?* Carving is one Mans Trade ; Cooking is Anothers : Only he is more miserable that teaches it for Pleasure, than he that learns it for Necessity. It was Luxury, not Philosophy, that Invented Fish-Pools, as well as Palaces. Where, in  
Case



Case of Foul weather at Sea, they might have Fishes, to supply their Gluttony, in Harbor. We do not only Pamper our Lusts, but Provoke them: As if we were to Learn the very Art of Voluptuousness. What was it but Avarice, that Originally brake the Union of Society; and Prov'd the cause of Poverty, even to those that were the most Wealthy? Every Man Possess'd All, till the World came to Appropriate Possessions to themselves. In the First Age, Nature was both a Law, and a Guide; and the Best Govern'd; Which was but according to Nature too. The largest, and the strongest Bull leads the Heard; the Goodliest Elephant; and, among Men too, in the Blessed times of Innocence, the Best was Uppermost. They chose Governors for their Manners; who neither Acted any Violence, nor suffer'd any. They Protected the Weak against the Mighty; and Perswaded, or Disswaded, as they saw Occasion. Their Prudence Provided for their People; their Courage Kept them Safe from Dangers; their Bounty both Supply'd, and Adorn'd their Subjects. It was a *Duty*, Then, to  
*Command,*

*Command*, not a *Government*. No Man, in those Dayes, had either a Mind to do an Injury, or a Cause for't. He that commanded well, was Well Obey'd: And, the worst Menace the Governors could then make to the Disobedient, was, to Forſake them. But, with the corruption of Times, Tyranny crept in, and the World began to have Need of Laws; and thoſe Laws were made by Wiſe Men too, as *Solon*, and *Licurgus*, who Learn'd their Trade in the School of *Pythagoras*.

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EPIST. XXII.

## EPIST. XXII.

*Man is Compounded of Soul, and Body:  
And has Naturally a Civil War with-  
in Himself. The Difference betwixt  
a Life of Virtue, and a Life of Plea-  
sure.*

**T**Here is not so Disproportionate a Mixture in any Creature, as that is in Man, of Soul, and Body. There is Intemperance ; joyn'd with Divinity ; Folly, with Severity ; Sloth, with Activity, and Uncleanneſs with Purity. But, a Good Sword is never the worſe for an Ill Scabbard. We are mov'd, more by Imaginary Fears, than Truths ; for Truth has a Certainty, and Foundation ; but, in the other, we are expoſ'd to the Li- cenſe, and Conjecture of a Distracted Mind, and our Enemies, are not more Imperious, than our Pleaſures. We ſet our Hearts upon Tranſitory things ; as if they Themſelves were Everlaſting ; or Wee, on the other ſide, to Poſſeſs them for Ever. Why do we not rather ad-  
M vance

vance our Thoughts to things that are Eternal, and contemplate the Heavenly Original of all Beings? Why do we not, by the Divinity of Reason, triumph over the weaknesſes of Fleſh, and Blood? It is by Providence that the World is preserv'd; and not from any Virtue in the Matter of it; for the World is as Mortal as we are: Only the *Allmighty Wiſdome* carries it ſafe through all the Motions of Corruption. And ſo by Prudence, Humane Life it ſelf may be prolong'd; if we will but ſtint our ſelves in thoſe Pleaſures that bring the greater part of us untimely to our End. Our Paſſions are nothing elſe but Certain Diſallowable Motions of the Mind; Sudden, and Eager; which, by Frequency, and Neglect, turn to a Diſeaſe; as a Diſtillation brings us firſt to a Cough, and then to a Pthiſique. We are carry'd Up to the Heavens, and Down again into the Deep, by Turns; ſo long as we are govern'd by our Affections, and not by Virtue. Paſſion, and Reason, are a kind of Civil War within us; and as the one, or the other has Dominion, we are either Good, or Bad. So that it ſhould be

be our Care, that the worst Mixture may not prevaile. And they are link'd, like the Chain of Causes, and Effects, one to another. Betwixt violent Passions, and a Fluctuation, or Wambling of the Mind, there is such a Difference, as betwixt the Agitation of a Storm, and the Nauseous Sicknes of a Calm. And they have all of them their Symptomes too, as well as our Bodily Distempers : They that are troubled with the Falling Sicknes, know when the Fit is a Coming, by the Cold of the Extreme Parts ; the Dazling of the Eye ; the failing of the Memory ; the Trembling of the Nerves, and the Giddiness of the Head. So that every Man knows his own Disease, and should provide against it : Anger, Love, Sadness, Fear, may be read in the Countenance ; And so may the Virtues too. Fortitude makes the Eye Vigorous ; Prudence makes it Intent ; Reverence shews it self in Modesty ; Joy, in Serenity ; and Truth in Openness, and Simplicity. There are Sown the Seeds of Divine things in Mortal Bodies. If the Mind be well Cultivated, the Fruit answers the Original ; and, if not, all runs into Weeds. We

are all of us Sick of Curable Diseases : and it costs us more to be Miserable, than would make us perfectly Happy. Consider the Peaceable State of Clemency , and the Turbulence of Anger ; the Softness, and Quiet of Modesty, and the Restlessness of Lust. How Cheap, and easie to us is the Service of Virtue, and how Dear we pay for our Vices ? The Sovereign Good of Man, is a Mind that Subjects all things to it self ; and is it self subject to Nothing : His Pleasures are Modest, Severe, and Reserv'd, and rather the Sawce, or the Diversion of Life, than the Entertainment of it. It may be some Question , whether such a Man goes to Heaven, or Heaven comes to Him : For a Good Man is Influenc'd, by God himself ; and has a kind of Divinity within him. What if one Good Man Lives in Pleasure, and Plenty , and another in Want, and Misery ? 'tis no Virtue, to condemn Superfluities, but Necessities : And they are both of them Equally Good, though under several Circumstances, and in Different Stations. *Cato* (the *Censor*) wag'd War with the *Manners of Rome* ; *Scipio*, with the *Enemies*.  
Nay,



Nay, bating the very Conscience of Virtue, Who is there, that upon Sober Thoughts, would not be an Honest Man, even for the Reputation of it. Virtue you shall find in the Temple, in the Field, or upon the Walls, cover'd with Dust, and Blood, in the Defence of the Publick. Pleasures you shall find Sneaking in the Stews, Sweating-Houses, Powder'd, and Painted, &c. Not that Pleasures are wholly to be Disclaim'd, but to be used with Moderation, and to be made Subservient to Virtue. Good Manners allwayes please us; but VVickedness is Restless, and perpetually Changing; not for the Better, but for Variety. VVe are torn to pieces betwixt Hopes, and Fears; by which Means, Providence (which is the greatest Blessing of Heaven) is turn'd into a Mischief. VVild Beasts, when they see their Dangers, fly from them: and when they have scap'd them, they are Quiet; but wretched Man is equally tormented, both with things Past, and to Come: For the Memory brings back the Anxiety of our Past Fears, and our Fore-sight Anticipates the Future:

VWhereas the Present makes no Man Miserable. *If we Fear all things that are Possible, we live without any Bounds to our Miseries.*

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EPIST. XXIII.

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## EPIST. XXIII.

*We abuse Gods Blessings, and turn them into Mischiefs. Meditations upon the Horrors of Earthquakes, and Consolations against them. Death is the same thing which way soever it comes: Only we are more mov'd by Accidents that we are not us'd to.*

**T**Here is nothing so Profitable, but it may be Perverted to our Injury. Without the Use of the *Winds*, how should we do for Commerce? Beside that, they keep the Ayr Sweet, and Healthful, and bring seasonable Rains upon the Earth. It was never the Intent of Providence, that they should be Employ'd for War, and Devastation; and yet that's a great Part of the Use we make of them; pursuing one Hazard through another. We expose our selves to Tempests, and to Death, without so much as the Hope of a Sepulchre. And all this might be Born too; if we only

ran these Risques in order to Peace : But, when we have scap'd so many Rocks, and Flats, Thunder, and Storms, What's the Fruit of all our Labor, and Terrour ? It is only War ; and to Burn, and Ravage, as if the Earth were not large enough for the Scene of our Destruction. Whereas we might live, and dye at Ease, if we had a mind to't ; and draw out our Lives in Security. Why do we Press our own Dangers then, and Provoke our Fates ? What do we look for ? Only Death ; which is to be Found every where. It will find us in our Beds, in our Chambers : But, wheresoever it finds us, let it find us Innocent. What a Madness is it to pursue Mischieves ; to fall foul upon those we do not know ; to be Angry without a Cause ; to Over-run whatsoever is in our way ; and, like Beasts, to kill what we have no Quarrel to ? Nay, worse than Beasts ; We run great Hazards, only to bring us to Greater. We force our way to Gold, without any regard, either to God, or Man. But, in all this, without any Cause of Complaint, we abuse the Benefits of God, and turn them all into Mischiefs.

VVe

VVe dig for Gold ; we Leave the Light, and Abandon the Courses of a better Nature. VVe Descend, where we find a new Position of Things ; Hideous Caves, Hollow, and Hanging Rocks ; Horrid Rivers ; a Deep, and Perpetual Darkness, and not without the Apprehensions even of Hell it self. How Little now, and how Inconsiderable are those things that Men venture for, with the Price of their Lives ! But, to pass from those Hazards, that we may avoid, to others, which we cannot. As in the Case of *Earthquakes*.

In what Condition can any Man be Safe ; when the VWorld it self is shaken ; and, the only thing that passes for fixed, and Unmoveable in the Universe, Trembles, and Deceives us ? VVhither shall we fly for security, if wheresoever we are, the Danger be still under our Feet. Upon the Cracking of a House, every Man takes himself to his heels ; and leaves all to save himself : But, VVhat Retreat is there, where that which should Support us, Fails us ; when the Foundation, not only of Cities, but even  
of

of the VWorld it self, Opens, and VVa-  
 vers? VWhat Help, or what Comfort;  
 where Fear it self can never carry us off?  
 An Enemy may be Kept at a Distance  
 with a VVall: A Castle may put a stop  
 to an Army; a Port may Protect us  
 from the Fury of a Tempest; Fire it self  
 does not follow him that runs away  
 from't: A Vault may Defend us against  
 Thunder; and we may quit the Place  
 in a Pestilence: There is some Remedy  
 in all these Evils. Or however, no Man  
 ever knew a Whole Nation destroy'd  
 with Lightning. A Plague may Un-  
 people a Town, but it will not Carry it  
 away. There is no Evil of such an Ex-  
 tent, so Inevitable, so Greedy, and so  
 Publickly Calamitous, as an Earthquake.  
 For, it does not only Devour Houses;  
 Families, or Single Towns, but Ruines  
 Whole Countreys, and Nations: Either  
 Overturning, or Swallowing them up,  
 without so much as leaving any Foot-  
 step, or Mark of what they were. Some  
 People have a greater Horror for this  
 Death, than for any Other: *To be ta-*  
*ken away alive, out of the Number of the*  
*Living*; as if all Mortals, by what Means  
 soever,



soever, were not to come to the same End. Nature has Eminently this Justice, that when we are all dead, we are all Alike. And, 'tis not a Pin Matter, whether I be Crush'd to Pieces by one Stone, or by a whole Mountain; whether I perish by the Fall of a House, or under the Burthen of the whole Earth; Whether I be swallow'd up alone, or with a Thousand more for Company. What does it signifie to me, the Noise, and the Discourse that is made about my Death; when Death is every where, and in all Cases, the same? We should therefore Arme our selves against that blow, that can neither be Avoided, nor Foreseen. And, it is not the Forswearing of those Places, that we find Infested with Earthquakes, that will do our Business; for there is no Place that can be warranted against them. What if the Earth be not yet mov'd? It is still Movable; for the whole Body of it lies under the Same Law, and expos'd to Danger; only some part at One time, and some at Another. As it is in great Cities, where all the houses are subject to Ruin, though they do not all Fall Together :

gether : So in the Body of the Earth, now This Part Failes, and then That. Tyre was Formerly Subject to Earth-quakes; In *Asia* Twelve Cities were swallow'd up in a Night; *Achaia*, and *Macedonia* have had their Turns, and now *Campagnia*. The Fate goes Round; and Strikes at last where it has a great while passed by. It falls out oftner 'tis true, in some Places, than in Others: But, no Place is totally Free, and Exempt. And, it is not only Men, but Cities, Coasts, nay the Shores, and the very Sea it self, that suffer under the Dominion of Fate. And yet we are so vain, as to Promise our selves some sort of Assurance in the Goods of Fortune. Never considering, that the very Ground we stand upon is Unstable. And, it is not the Frailty of this or that Place, but the Quality of every Spot of it; For, not one Inch of it is so compacted, as not to admit many causes of its Resolution; And, though the Bulk of the Earth remain Entire, the Parts of it may yet be broken.

There

There is not any thing, which can promise to it self a Lasting quiet. And it is no small Comfort to us, the Certainty of our Fate: For, it is a Folly to Fear where there is no Remedy. He that troubles himself sooner than he needs, grieves more also than is Necessary: For the same weakness that makes him Anticipate his Misery, makes him Enlarge it too. The Wise fortify themselves by Reason, and Fools by Despair. That saying which was apply'd to a Conquer'd Party under Fire, and Sword, might have been spoken to all Mankind. *That Man is in some Sense, out of Danger, that is out of Hope.* He that would Fear nothing, should Consider, that if he fears Any thing, he must fear Every thing. Our very Meat, and Drink, Sleeping, and Waking, without Measure, are Hurtful to us. Our Bodies are Nice, and Weak; and a Small Matter does their Work. That Man has too high an Opinion of himself, that is only afraid of Thunder, and of Earth-quakes. If he were Conscious of his own Infirmities, he would as much fear the being Choak'd with his  
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own Phlegme. What do we see in our Selves, that Heaven, and Earth should joyn in a Distemper to Procure our Dissolution; when the Ripping of a Hang-nail is sufficient to Dispatch us? We are Afraid of Inundations from the Sea, when a Glass of Wine, if it goes the wrong way, is Enough to Suffocate us. It is a great Comfort in Death, the very Mortality it self. We creep under Ground for fear of Thunder; we dread the sudden Concussions of the Earth, and the Rages of the Sea, when yet we carry Death in our Own Veines; and it is at hand in all Places, and at all Times. There is nothing so little, but it is of Force enough to bring us to our Last End. Nay, so far should we be from dreading an Eminent Fate, more than a Vulgar, that on the Contrary, since Dye we must, we should rather Rejoyce in the Breathing of our Last, under a more Glorious Circumstance. What if the Ground stand still within its bounds, and without any Violence? I shall have it over me at Last; and 'tis all one to me, whether I be laid under That, or That layes it Self over me: *But, it is a Terrible*

*Terrible thing for the Earth to gape, and swallow a Man up into a Profound Abyss: And what then? Is Death any Easier Above Ground? What cause have I of Complaint, if Nature will do me the honor to Cover me with a Part of her Self? Since we must Fall, there is a Dignity in the very Manner of it, when the World it self is Shock'd for Company. Not that I would wish for a Publick Calamity; but it is some Satisfaction in my Death; that I see the World also to be Mortal.*

Neither are we to take these Extraordinary Revolutions for Divine Judgments; as if such Motions of the Heavens, and of the Earth, were the Denouncings of the VVrath of the Almighty: but they have their Ordinate, and their Natural Causes: Such as, in Proportion, we have in our own Bodies; and while they seem to Act a Violence, they Suffer it. But yet for want of knowing the Causes of things, they are Dreadful to us; and the more so, because they happen but seldome. *But why are we commonly more Afraid of that which we are*  
not

*not Us'd to ?* Because we look upon Nature with our Eyes, not with our Reason : Rather Computing what she Usually Does, than what she is Able to do. And we are Punish'd for this Negligence, by taking those things to which we are not VVonted, to be New, and Prodigious. The Eclipses of the Sun, and Moon, Blazing Stars, and Meteors, while we Admire them, we Fear them ; and since we Fear them, because we do not Understand them, it is worth our while to Study them, that we may no longer Fear them. VVhy should I fear a Man, a Beast, an Arrow, or a Lance, when I am expos'd to the Encounter of Greater Dangers ? We are Assaulted by the Nobler parts of Nature it self ; by the Heavens, by the Seas, and the Land. Our Business is therefore to Defy Death, whether Extraordinary, or Common. No matter for the Menaces of it, so long as it Asks no more of us than Age it self will take from us ; and every petty Accident that befalls us. He that Contemns Death, What does he Care for either Fire, or Water ; the very Dissolution of the Universe ? or if the Earth should Open  
Under



Under him, and shew him all the Secrets of the Infernal Pit, He would look Down without Trouble. In the Place that we are all of us to go to, there are no Earthquakes, or Thunder-Claps; no Tempestuous Seas; Neither War; nor Pestilence. *Is it a Small Matter? Why do we fear it then? Is it a Great Matter? Let it rather once fall upon us, then always hang over us.* Why should I dread my Own End, when I know that an End I must have, and that all Created things are Limited.

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## EPIST. XXIV.

*A Discourse of Gods Providence, in the Misfortunes of Good Men in this World, and in the Prosperity of the Wicked.*

**Y**OU are troubled, I perceive, that your Servant is run away from you; but I do not hear yet that you are either Robb'd, or Strangl'd, or Poyson'd, or Betray'd, or Accus'd by him: So that you have scap'd well, in Comparison with your Fellows. And, Why should you complain then; especially under the Protection of so gracious a Providence as suffers no Man to be miserable but by his own Fault? Nor is this a Subject worthy of a wise Mans Consideration. Adversity indeed is a terrible thing in Sound, and Opinion; and that's all. Some Men are Banish'd, and strip'd of their Estates; Others again are Poor, in Plenty; (which  
is

is the basest sort of Beggery.) Some are overborn by a Popular Tumult, that breaks out like a Tempest, even in the highest security of a Calm; Or like a Thunder-Clap, that frights all that are near it: There is but One Struck, perhaps, but the Fear extends to all, and affects those that May Suffer, as well as those that Doe. As in the Discharge of a Piece only with Powder; 'Tis not the Stroke, but the Crack, that frights the Birds. Adversity, I'll grant you, is not a thing to be wish'd; no more than War; but, if it be my Lot to be Torn with the Stone, Broken upon the Wheel, or to receive Wounds, or Maims; It shall bemy Prayer, that I may bear my Fortune as becomes a Wise, and an Honest Man. We do not Pray for Tortures, but for Patience; nor for War, but for Generosity and Courage, in all the Extremities of War, if it happens. Afflictions are but the Exercise of Virtue; and an Honest Man is out of his Element, when he is Idle. It must be Practice, and Patience, that Perfects it. Do we not see how one Wrestler provokes another? And if he find him not to be

his Match, he will call for some Body to help him, that may put him to all his strength.

It is a Common Argument against the Justice of Providence, in the matter of Reward, and Punishment; *the Misfortunes of Good Men in this World, and the Prosperity of the Wicked*: But, it is an easie matter to vindicate the Cause of the Gods. There are many things that we call Evil, which turn very often to the Advantage of those that suffer them; or at least, for the Common Good, whereof Providence has the greater Care. And further; they either befall those that bear them willingly, or those that deserve them by their Impatience under them: And Lastly, they come by Divine Appointment; and to those that are Good Men, even for that very Reason, because they are Good. Nor is there any thing more Ordinary, than for that which we fear'd as a Calamity, to prove the Foundation of our Happiness. How many are there in the World that enjoy all things to their Own Wish, whom God never thought worthy of a Tryal? If it might

might be imagin'd, that the *Allmighty* should take off his Thought from the Care of his Whole Work, What more Glorious Spectacle could he reflect upon, than a Valiant Man Struggling with Adverse Fortune: Or *Cato's* Standing Upright, and Unmov'd, under the Shock of a Publick Ruin? *Let the Whole World* (sayes he) *fall into one hand, and let Cæsar encompass me with his Legions by Land, his Shipping at Sea, and his Guards at the Gates; Cato will yet cut out his way; and with That Weapon that was untainted, even in the Civil VVar, give himself that Liberty, which Fate deny'd to his Country.* Set upon the great VWork then, and deliver thy self from the Clog of thy Humanity. Juba, and Petreius have already done the good office One for the Other, by a Generous Concurrence of Resolution, and Fate; but Cato is above Example, and does as much scorn to ask his Death of any Man, as his Life. With what Joy did this Great Man Contemplate Immortality; when he took his Book, and his Sword together; and, in Cold Thoughts dispatch'd himself? Let this suffice of *Cato*, whose Virtue Provi-

dence made use of to Cope with all the Powers of the Earth. His Courage took delight in, and sought for all Occasions of Hazard; keeping his Eye still upon the End, without valuing the Difficulties of the Passage. The Sufferance is one Part of the Glory; and though one Man may scape without Wounds, yet he is still more Reverend, and Remarkable, that comes off Bloody. The Malice of Great Men is grievous, you'll say; and yet he Supported the Oppositions of *Pompey*, *Cæsar*, and *Crassus*. Is it troublesome to be Repuls'd. *Vatinus* was preferr'd before him. Prosperity shews a Man but one part of Humane Nature. No Body knows what such a Man is good for: Neither in truth does he understand himself, for want of Experiment. Temporal Happiness is for weak, and Vulgar Minds, but, the subduing of Publick Terrors is a Work that is reserv'd for more Generous Spirits. Calamity is the Touch-stone of a Brave Mind, that resolves to Live, and Dye Free, and Master of it self. The Combatant brings no Mettal into the Field, that was never Batter'd: He that has lost Blood,  
and



and yet keeps his Stomach; he that has been under his Enemy, and worsted, and yet comes on again, and gathers heart from his Misfortunes; That's the Man of Hope, and Courage.

But, Is it not a very Unjust, and a Rigorous Fate, that Good Men should be Poor, and Friendless? All this is no more than the Natural Work of Matter, and Form. Mean Souls are meanly Principled: But, there goes more to the making up of a Brave Man, that is to work out his way through Difficulties and Storms. We are condemn'd to Terrible Encounters; and because we cannot, according to the Course of Nature, Avoid them, we have Faculties given us, that will Enable us to Bear them: Or at the worst, we have a Retreat; If we will not fight, we may fly. So that nothing is made more Easie to us, than that which is most Necessary to us, to Dye. No Man is kept in the World against his Will. But Adversity is the Better for us all; for, it is Gods Mercy, to shew the World their Errors, and that the things they Fear, and

Covet, are neither Good, nor Evil ; being the Common and promiscuous Lot both of Good Men , and Bad. If they were Good, only the Good should enjoy them : And if Bad , only the Wicked should suffer them. One Man is taken away in a Scuffle for a Wench, and another in the Defence of his Country ; and we find Silver , and Gold , both in a Temple, and in the Stewes.

Now to shew you, that the Virtue which I affect, is not so Imaginary, and Extravagant, as it is taken to be, I will allow a Wise Man to Tremble , to turn Pale ; nay, and to Grone too : And to suffer all the Affections of his Bodily Sense, provided that he keep his Mind Firm, and Free from submission to his Body ; and that he do not Repent of his Constancy , (which is, in it self, so great a Virtue, that there is some Authority, even in a pertinacious Error.) If the Body may be brought by Exercise, to the Contempt of Bruises, and Wounds, How much more easily then may the Mind be Fortify'd against the Assaults  
of

of Fortune; And though perhaps thrown down, and Trod upon, yet Recover it self? The Body must have Meat and Drink, much Labor, and Practice; whereas the Food, and the Business of the Mind is within it self; and Virtue is maintain'd without either Toyl, or Charge. If you say, That many Professors of Wisdom are wrought upon by Menaces, and Mischiefs, these, let me tell you, are but Proficients, and not as yet arriv'd at the State of Wisdom. They are not strong enough to practice what they know. It is with our Dispositions, as with our Cloaths: They will take some Colours at One Dipping: But others must be steep'd over and over before they will Imbibe them. And so for Disciplines; they must Soke, and lye long before they take the Tincture. No Man can receive an Injury, and not be mov'd at it: But yet he may keep himself Free from Perturbations; and so far from being troubled at them, that he may make use of them for the Experiment, and Tryal of his Virtue; keeping himself still moderate, Placid Chearful,

ful, and Safe in a Profound quiet; and Fixed in his Station. *But if a Wise Man cannot be Poor; How comes it that he is many times without either Meat, Drink, Cloaths, or Lodging? If only Fools are Mad, How comes it then, that Wise Men have their Alienations of Mind, and talk as Idly in a Fever as other people?* 'Tis one thing, the Receiving of an Injury, and another thing, the Conceiving of an Indignation for it: It is the Body in This Case that suffers, (which is the Fools Part) but not the Mind. That Man is never the worse Pilot that by foul weather is forc'd beside his Business. When a Ship springs a Leak, we do not presently quarrel either with the Mariners, or with the Vessel. But, some to the Pump, others into the Hold, to keep the Ship above Water. And if we cannot absolutely Master it, we must still work on; For it is then a great point gain'd, if we can but keep it at a stay. Some Men are strangely Transported at the Insolence of the Porter that refuses to let them into a Great Mans House.

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They forget that the door of a Prison is more strictly guarded than that of a Palace. He that has Business must pay for his Passage, and Sweeten him, as he would do a Churlish Curr with a Sop. That which is to be Sold, is to be Bought: He's a weak Man, that rates himself according to the Civility of a Slave. Let him have a Reverence for himself, and then no matter who despises him. What if he should break his Staff, or Cause his Master to turn him away, or to correct, him? He that Contends, supposes an *Equality*; and even when he has got the better of him, admits that there *Was* one. What if he should receive a Blow? *Cato* (the greatest Man of his Age) did not only Forgive it, but Forget it.

'Tis not to say, That This, or That is *Tolerable* to a Wise Man, or *Intolerable*: If *We* do not totally *subdue Fortune*, *Fortune Overcomes Us*. It is the Foundation of a Happy Life, for a Man to depend upon himself;

self; but an Absolute Tranquility of Mind, and a Freedom from Errors, must be the Business of another World.

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EPIST. XXV.

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## EPIST. XXV.

*A Wise, and a Good Man is Proof  
against all Accidents. Of Fate.*

**T**He Book you promis'd me is now come to my hand ; and I open'd it with an Intent to read it over at Leisure. But, when I was once in, I could not lay it down again, till I had gone through with it. At Present I shall only tell you, that I am exceedingly pleas'd with the Choice of the Subject : but I am Transported with the Spirit, and Gentleness of it. You shall hear farther from me upon a Second Reading ; and you need not fear the hearing of the Truth, for your Goodness leaves a Man no place for flattery. I find you still to be one and the same Man, which is a great Matter ; and only proper to a Wise Man : for fools are Various One while Thrifty, and Grave ; Another while Profuse, and Vain. Happy is the Man that sets himself Right at first, and continues so to the End. All Fools, we say,  
are

are Mad Men, though they are not all of them in *Bedlam*. We find some at the Bar, some upon the Bench, and not a few even in the Senate it self. One Mans Folly is sad; Anothers, Wanton; and a Third's is Bustie, and Impertinent. A Wise man carries all his Treasure within himself: What Fortune Gives, she may Take; but he leaves nothing at her Mercy. He Stands Firm, and keeps his Ground against all Misfortunes, without so much as Changing Countenance. He is Free, Inviolable, Unshaken; -Proof against all Accidents; and not only Invincible, but Inflexible. So long as he cannot Lose any thing of his own, he never troubles himself for what's Anothers. He is a Friend to Providence, and will not murmur at any thing that comes to pass by Gods Appointment. He is not only Resolute, but Generous, and Good Natur'd; and ready to lay down his Life in a Good Cause; and for the Publick Safety, to Sacrifice his Own. He does not so much consider the Pleasure of his Life, as the Need that the World has of him: And he is not so Nice neither, as to be weary of his Life, while

while he may either serve his Wife, or his Friends. Nor is it all, that his Life is Profitable to Them; but, it is likewise Delightful to Himself, and carries its own Reward; for, What can be more Comfortable, than to be so Dear to Another, as for that very Reason to become Dearer to Himself. If he Loses a Child, he is Pensive; he is Compassionate to the Sick, and only Troubled, when he sees Men wallowing in Infamy, and Vice. Whereas, on the Other side, you shall see nothing but Restlessness; One Man Hankering after his Neighbors Wife; Another in Pain about his Own; A Third in Grief for a Repulse; Another as much out of humor for his Success. If He loses an Estate, he parts with it as a thing that was only Adventitious. Or if it was of his own acquiring, he computes the Possession, and Loss; and says thus to himself, I shall live as well afterward, as I did before. Our Houses, (says he) may be Burnt, or Rob'd; Our Lands taken from us; and we can call nothing our Own, that is under the Dominion of Fortune. It is a Foolish Avarice, that restrains all things to a Propriety;

priety; and believes nothing to be a Mans Own, that's Publick. Whereas a Wise Man judges Nothing so much his Own, as That wherein Mankind is allow'd a share. It is not with the Blessings of Providence, as it is with a *Dole*; where every Man receives so much a Head; but every Man there has All. That which we Eat, and either Give, or Receive with the Hand, may be broken into Parts: But Peace, and Freedom of Mind are not to be Divided. He that has First cast off the Empire of Fortune, needs not fear that of Great Men, for they are but Fortunes Hands; nor was any man ever broken by Adversity, that was not first betray'd by Prosperity. *But, VVhat signifies Philosophy, you'll say, if there be a Fate; If we be Govern'd by Fortune, or some over-ruling Power? For Certainties are Unchangeable, and there's no Providing against Uncertainties. If what I shall Do, and Resolve, be already Determin'd, VVhat use of Philosophy? Yes, great Use; for, taking all this for granted, Philosophy Instructs, and Advises us to obey God, and to follow him Willingly; to oppose Fortune*

tune Resolutely, and to Bear all Accidents.

Fate is an Irrevocable, an Invincible, and an Unchangable Decree; a Necessity of all Things, and Actions, according to Eternal Appointment. Like the Course of a River, it moves forward, without Contradiction, or Delay, in an Irresistable Flux, where one Wave pushes on another. He knows little of God, that Imagines it may be Controll'd. There is no Changing of the Purpose even of a Wise Man. For he sees beforehand what will be best for the Future. How much more Unchangeable then is the Almighty, to whom all Futurity is alwayes Present? *To what end then is it, if Fate be Inexorable, to offer up Prayers, and Sacrifices, any further, than to relieve the Scruples, and the Weaknesses of Sickly Minds?* My Answer is, First. That the Gods take no Delight in the Sacrifices of Beasts, or in the Images of Gold, and Silver, but in a Pious, and Obedient Will. And Secondly That by Prayers, and Sacrifices, Dangers, and Afflictions may be sometimes Re-

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mov'd;

mov'd ; sometimes Lessen'd; other whiles  
Deferr'd:and all this without any Offence  
to the Power,or Necessity of Fate. There  
are some things which Providence has left  
so far in Suspence, that they seem to be,  
(in a manner ) Conditional ; in such  
sort, that even Appearing Evils may, up-  
on our Prayers, and Supplications , be  
turn'd into Goods. Which is so far from  
being against Fate, that it is even a Part  
of Fate it self. You will say, *That either  
This shall come to Pass, or not. If the For-  
mer, It will be the same thing if we do not  
Pray: And if the Other, it will be the  
same thing if we do.* To this I must Re-  
ply; That the Proposition is False, for  
want of the Middle Exception betwixt  
the One, and the Other. This will be,  
(say I;) that is, if there shall any Pray-  
ers Interpose in the Case. But then do  
they Object on the Other side. That  
this very thing also is Necessary; for it is  
likewise determin'd by Fate, either that  
we shall Pray, or not. What if I should  
now grant you , that there is a Fate al-  
so even in our very Prayers? A Determi-  
nation that we shall Pray; and that  
therefore we shall Pray ? It is Decreed  
that



that a Man shall be Eloquent : But, upon Condition, that he apply himself to Letters. By the same Fate it is Decreed, that he shall so apply himself, and that therefore he shall learn. Such a Man shall be Rich, if he betake himself to Navigation. But, the same Fate that promises him a great Estate, appoints also that he shall Sail, and therefore he puts to Sea. It is the same Case in Expiations. A Man shall Avoid Dangers, if he can, by his Prayers, avoid the threatenings of Divine Vengeance. But this is Part of his Fate also, that he shall so do, and therefore he does it. These Arguments are made use of, to Prove, that there is nothing left to our Will, but that we are all Over-Rul'd by Fatalities. When we come to handle that Matter ; we shall shew the Consistency of Free-Will with Fate, having already made it appear, that notwithstanding the Certain order of Fate, Judgments may be Averted by Prayers, and Supplications : And, without any Repugnancy to Fate ; for they are part even of the Law of Fate it self. You will say Perhaps, *What am I the better for the*  
O 2 *Priest,*

*Priest, or the Prophet; for whether he bids me Sacrifice, or no, I lye under the necessity of doing it? Yes, in this I am the better for it, as he is the Minister of Fate. We may as well say, that it is Matter of Fate, that we are in Health; and yet we are indebted for it to the Physitian; because the Benefit of that Fate is convey'd to us by his Hand.*

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EPIST. XXVI.

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## EPIST. XXVI.

*All things are Produced out of Cause,  
and Matter. Of Providence. A  
Brave Man is a Match for Fortune.*

I Had yesterday but the one Half of it to my Self; My Distemper took up the Morning; the Afternoon was my Own. My First Tryal was, how far I could endure Reading: and when I saw I could bear That, I fell to Writing: and pitch'd upon a Subject Difficult enough, for it requir'd great Intention; but yet I was resolv'd not to be Overcome. Some of my Friends coming in, told me, that I did Ill; and took me off: So that from Writing, we pass'd into Discourse; and made you the Judge of the Matter in Question; The *Stoicks*, you know, will have all things to be Produc'd out of *Cause*, and *Matter*. The Matter is Dull, and Passive; Susceptible of any thing, but not Capable of Doing any thing it Self. The Cause is that Power that Formes the

Matter, this or that way, at Pleasure. Some thing there must be, of which every thing is Made; and then there must be a Workman to Form every thing. All Art is but an Imitation of Nature; and that which I speak in General of the World, holds in the Case of every Particular Person. As for Example. The Matter of a Statue is the Wood, the Stone, or the Marble; the Statuary shapes it, and is the Cause of it. *Aristotle* assigns Four Causes to every thing. The *Material*; which is the *Sine qua non* (or That without which It could not be.) The *Efficient*; as the VVorkman. The *Formal*; as That which is stamp'd upon 'all Operations; and the *Final*; which is the Design of the whole VVork. Now to explain This. The First Cause of the Statue (for the Purpose) is the Copper; For it had never been made, if there had not been something to work upon. The Second, is the Artificer, for if he had not understood his Art, it had never Succeeded. The Third Cause is the Form; For it could never properly have been the Statue of such, or such a Person; if such a Resemblance had not been  
put

put upon it. The Fourth Cause is the End of making it, without which it had never been made: As Money, if it were made for Sale; Glory, if the Workman made it for his Credit; or Religion, if he design'd the Bestowing of it upon a Temple. *Plato* adds a Fifth, which he calls the *Idea*, or the Exemplar, by which the Workman draws his Copy. And he makes God to be full of these Figures, which he represents to be Inexhaustible, Unchangeable, and Immortal. Now, upon the whole Matter, give us your Opinion. To me it seems, that here are either too many Causes assign'd, or too few; and they might as well have Introduc'd Time, and Place, as some of the rest. Either Clear the Matter in Question; or deal Plainly, and tell us that you cannot: And so let us return to those Cases, wherein all Mankind is agreed, the Reforming of our Lives, and the Regulation of our Manners. For these Subtilties are but time lost. Let us search our selves in the first Place, and afterward the World.

There's no great Hurt in passing over those things which we are never the better for, when we know ; and, it is so order'd by Providence, that there is no great difficulty in Learning, or Acquiring those things, which may make us either Happier, or Better. Beside that, whatsoever is Hurtful to us, we have drawn out of the very Bowels of the Earth.

Every Man knows, without Telling, that this Wonderful Fabrick of the Universe is not without a Governor ; and that a Constant Order cannot be the Work of Chance : For the Parts would then fall foul one upon another. The Motions of the Stars, and their Influences, are Acted by the Command of an Eternal Decree. It is by the Dictate of an Almighty Power, that the Heavy Body of the Earth hangs in Ballance. Whence comes the Revolution of Seasons, and the Flux of Rivers ? The wonderful virtue of the smallest Seeds ? (as an *Oak* to arise from an *Acorn*.) To say nothing of those things that seem to  
be



be most Irregular, and Uncertain; as Clouds, Rain, Thunder, the Eruptions of Fire out of Mountains, Earthquakes, and those Tumultuary Motions in the Lower Region of the Air, which have their Ordinate Causes; And so have those things too, which appear to us more Admirable, because less Frequent. As, Scalding Fountains, and New Islands started out of the Sea: Or, What shall we say of the Ebbing, and Flowing of the Ocean; the Constant Times, and Measures of the Tides, according to the Changes of the Moon that Influences moist Bodies? But this needs not; For, it is not that we Doubt of Providence, but Complain of it. And it were a good Office to Reconcile Mankind to the Gods, who are undoubtedly Best to the Best. It is against Nature that Good should hurt Good. A Good Man is not onely the Friend of God, but the very Image, the Disciple, and the Imitator of him, and the true Child of his Heavenly Father. He is true to himself; and Acts with Constancy, and Resolution. *Scipio*, by

a Cross Wind, being forc'd into the Power of his Enemies; cast himself upon the Point of his Sword; and, as the People were enquiring, what was become of the General; *The General* (says *Scipio*) *is very well*, and so he expir'd. What is it for a Man to Fall, if we consider the End, beyond which no Man Can Fall? We must repair to Wisdom for Armes against Fortune; for it were unreasonable for her to furnish Armes against her self. A Gallant Man is Fortunes Match: His Courage Provokes, and Despises those terrible Appearances, that would otherwise Enslave us. A Wise Man is out of the Reach of Fortune, but not Free from the Malice of it; and all Attempts upon him are no more than *Xerxes* his Arrows; they may darken the Day; but they cannot Strike the Sun. There is nothing so Holy, as to be Priviledg'd from Sacrilege. But, to Strike, and not to Wound, is Anger Lost; and he is Invulnerable that is Struck, and not Hurt. His Resolution is try'd; the Waves may dash themselves upon  
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on a Rock, but not Break it: Temples may be Profan'd, and Demolish'd; but the Deity still remains untouched.

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**EPIST. XXVII.**

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## EPIST. XXVII.

*Some Traditions of the Antients concerning Thunder, and Lightning; with the Authors Contemplations Thereupon.*

There is no question, but that Providence has given to Mortals the Tokens, or Fore-runners of things to Come; and by those means, laid open, in some measure, the Decrees of Fate: Only we take Notice of some things, without giving any heed to Others. There is not any thing done, according to the Course of Nature, which is not either the Cause, or the Sign, of something that follows: So that wheresoever there is Order, there is place for Prediction. But there is no judgement to be given upon Accidents. Now, though it is a very hard matter to arrive at the Fore-Knowledge of things to come, and to predict particularly what shall hereafter fall out, Upon

Upon a Certain Knowledge of the Power, and Influences of the Stars: It is yet unquestionable, that they have a Power, though we cannot expressly say what it is. In the Subject of Thunder, there are several Opinions, as to the significations of it. The *Stoicks* hold, that because the Cloud is Broken, therefore the *Bolt* is shot (*according to Common Speech.*) Others Conjecture, that the Cloud is broken to that very End, that it may discharge the Thunder-Bolt, referring all in such sort to God, as if the signification did not arise from the thing done, but as if the thing it self were done for the signification sake: But, whether the signification goes before, or follows, it comes all to the same Point. There are Three sorts of Lightning; the First is so pure, and subtile, that it pierces through whatsoever it Encounters. The Second Shatters, and Breaks every thing to pieces: the Other Burns; either by Blasting, Consuming, Inflaming, or Discolouring, and the like. Some Lightnings are Monitory; Some are Menacing,

cing, and others they Phanſy to be Promiſing. They Allot to *Jupiter* Three Sorts; the Firſt is only Monitory, and Gentle, which he caſts of his own Accord; The Second they make to be an Act of Counſel, as being done by the Vote, and Advice of Twelve Gods. This, they ſay, does many times ſome Good, but not without ſome Miſchief too. As the Deſtruction of One Man may prove the Caution of another. The Third is the Reſult of a Council of the Superior Deities; from whence proceed great Miſchiefs, both Publick, and Private. Now, this is a great Folly to Imagine, that *Jupiter* would wreak his Diſpleaſure upon Pillars, Trees, nay, upon Temples themſelves, and yet let the Sacrilegious go Free: To ſtrike Sheep, and Conſume Altars, and all this, upon a Conſultation of the Gods; as if he wanted either Skill, or Juſtice, to Govern his own Affairs by himſelf; either in Sparing the Guilty, or in Deſtroying the Innocent. Now, What ſhould be the Miſtery of all this? The Wiſdom of our Forefathers found it neceſſary to  
keep



keep Wicked People in Awe, by the Apprehension of a Superior Power; And to Fright them into their good Behaviour, by the Fear of an Armed, and an Avenging Justice over their Heads. But, How comes it, that the Lightning which comes from *Jupiter* himself, should be said to be harmless; and That which he casts, upon Counsel, and Advice, to be so Dangerous, and Mortal? The Moral of it is This. That all Kings, should, after *Jupiters* Example, do all Good by themselves. And when Severity is Necessary, permit That to be done by Others: Beside that, as Crimes are Unequal, so also should be the Punishments. Neither did they believe *That Jupiter* to be the *Thunderer*, whose Image was worship'd in the *Capitol*, and in other Places; but intended it of the *Maker*, and *Governor of the Universe*, by what Name soever we shall call him. Now, in truth, *Jupiter* does not Immediately cast the Lightning himself; but leaves Nature to her Ordinary Method of Operation; so that what he does not Immediately

mediately by himself, he does yet Cause to be done; For, whatsoever Nature does, *God* does. There may be something gather'd out of all things, that are either said, or done, that a Man may be the better for: And he does a greater thing that Masters the Fear of Thunder, than he that discovers the Reason of it. We are Surrounded, and Beset with Ill Accidents, and since we cannot avoid the stroke of them, let us prepare our selves honestly to bear them. But, How must that be? By the Contempt of Death we do also Contemn all things in the way to it; as Wounds, Shipwracks, the Fury of Wild Beasts, or any other violence whatsoever; which, at the worst, can but part the Soul, and the Body. And, we have this for our Comfort, though our Lives are at the Mercy of Fortune, she has yet no power over the Dead.

How many are there that call for Death in the Distress of their Hearts, even for the very Fear of it? And, this Unadvised Desire of Death, does, in Common,

mon, affect both the best, and the worst of Men; only with this Difference, the Former Despise Life, and the other are Weary of it.

'Tis a Nauseous thing to serve the Body, and to be so many years a doing so many Beastly things, over and over. It is well, if in our Lives, we can please Others; but, whatever we do, in our Deaths, let us be sure to please our selves. Death is a thing which no Care can avoid; no Felicity can Tame it; no Power Overcome it. Other things are Disposed of by Chance, and Fortune; but, Death treats all Men alike.

The Prosperous must Dye, as well as the Unfortunate; and, methinks the very Despair of overcoming our Fate, should inspire us with Courage to Encounter it: For, there is no Resolution so Obstinate, as that which arises from Necessity. It makes a Coward as bold as *Julius Caesar*, though upon different Principles. We are all of us

P                      reserv'd

reserv'd for Death ; and, as Nature  
brings forth One Generation, she Calls  
back Another. The whole Dispute is,  
about the Time, but no body doubts  
about the Thing it self.

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## EPIST. XXVIII.

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## EPIST. XXVIII.

*A Contemplation of Heaven, and Heavenly Things. Of God; and of the Soul.*

**T**Here is a great Difference betwixt Philosophy, and other Arts; and a greater yet, betwixt That Philosophy it self, which is of Divine Contemplation, and That which has a regard to things here Below. It is much Higher, and Braver; It takes a Larger Scope; and being unsatisfy'd with what it sees, it aspires to the Knowledge of something that is Greater, and Fairer, and which Nature has placed out of our Ken. The One only teaches us what is to be done upon Earth; the Other reveales to us That which Actually is done in Heaven: The One discusses our Errors; and holds the Light to us, by which we distinguish in the Ambiguities of Life; the Other Surmounts that

P 2                      Darknes

Darkness which we are wrapt up in, and carries us up to the Fountain of Light it self. And then it is that we are in a special manner to acknowledge the Infinite Grace, and Bounty of the Nature of things; when we see it, not only where it is Publick, and Common; but in the very secrets of it; as being admitted into the Cabinet of the Divinity it self. There it is that we are taught to understand what is the *Matter* of the World; who is the *Author*, and *Preserver* of it. What *God* himself is; and whether he be wholly Intent upon *Himself*; or at any time descends to Consider *Us*. Whether he has done his work *once for all*; or whether he be *still in Action*: Whether he be a *Part of the World*, or the *World it self*: Whether he be at *Liberty*, or no, to determine any thing anew to day, and to Controle, or Derogate from the Law of Fate. Whether it be any Diminution of his Wisdom, or any Confession of Error, to Do, and Undo. Or to have made things that were afterward to be alter'd:



ter'd: For, the same things must of Necessity alwayes please him, who can never be pleas'd, but with that which is Best. Now, this is no Lessening, either of his Liberty, or of his Power; for he himself is his own Necessity. Without the Benefit, and the Comfort of these Thoughts, it had been e'en as well for us never to have been Born. For, to what end do we Live? Is it only to Eat, and to Drink? To Stuff up an Infirm, and Fluid Carcass, that would Perish without it; and to live only a Servant to one that is Sick? To Fear Death, to which we are all Born? Take away this Inestimable Good, and Life it self is not worth the Labor, and the Care of it. Oh! how wretched, how Contemptible a thing were Man, if he should not advance himself above the State of Humane Affairs? So long as we struggle with our Passions, What is there in This World that we do, which is Glorious? Nay, if we advance our selves so far as to Overcome them; It is but the destroying of so many Monsters. And, Have we not then a mighty Exploit to value

our selves upon, when we have made our selves a little more Tolerable than the Worst of Men? Is it not a wondrous matter to brag of, that we are a little stronger than a Man that is Sick? Alas! Alas! My Friend, there's a large Difference betwixt Strength, and Health. You have not a Wicked Mind perhaps; you may have a Clear Brow, a Tongue that will not Flatter, and a Single Heart: You have not That Avarice perchance, that refuses to it self whatsoever it takes from other people; nor That Luxury, that squanders away Money Shamefully, and yet more shamefully repairs it: Nor that Ambition, that leads you by Unworthy Wayes to places of Preferment. These are only Negatives; and you have Got nothing all this while. You will tell me, that, you have escap'd many things: But you have not yet Escap'd your Self. The Virtue that we recommend is High, and Illustrious. Not that it is a Happiness in it self, to be Free from Evil: but because it Dignifies, and Enlarges the Mind; Because it prepares it for the Know-

Knowledge of Heavenly Things, and makes it Capable even of Conversing with God Himself. It is then arriv'd at the highest Pitch of Humane Felicity; when it soars Aloft, and enters into the Privacies of Nature, trampling all that is Evil, or Vulgar, under its Feet. What a Delight, what a Transport is it, for a Soul that is wandering among the Stars; to look down, and Laugh at the Palaces of Princes, and the whole Globe of the Earth, with all its Treasures? I do not speak of That only that is converted into Money, and Plate, but of That also which is reserv'd in the Bowels of the Earth, to gratifie the Insatiable Covetousness of Posterity. Nor can we ever bring our selves to the Absolute Contempt of Luxurious Ornaments; Rich Furniture; Stately Buildings, Pleasant Gardens, and Fountains; till we have the World Under us, and till looking down from the Heavens, and beholding That Spot of Ground we Live upon; (the Greater Part of it Cover'd with the Sea; beside a great deal of it Desolate, and either Scorch'd, or Frozen) we shall

say Thus to our selves. *Is This Miserable Point the Ball of Contention, that is divided among so many Nations with Fire, and Sword? How Ridiculous are the Bounds, as well as the Contests of Mortals! Such a Prince must not pass such a River; nor another Prince those Mountains; and, Why do not the very Pismires Canton out their Posts, and Jurisdictions too? For, What does the Bustle of Troops, and Armies amount to, more, than the business of a Swarm of Ants upon a Mole-hill? The Scene of all the Important Actions here. Below, where, both at Sea, and Land, we Tug, and Scuffle for Dominion, and Wealth, is but a wretched Point of Earth; Whereas the Dominions of the Soul Above, are Boundless. This very Contemplation gives us Force, Liberty, and Nourishment; The Mind is There, at Home: And it has This Argument of its Divinity, that it takes Delight in what's Divine. It Contemplates the Rising, and the Falling of the Stars, and the Admirable Harmony of Order, even in their Various Motions: Discussing, and Enquiring into every thing,*

thing, as properly appertaining unto it self. With how much scorn does it then Reflect upon the Narrowness of its Former Habitation? There it is, that it learns the End of its Proper Being; the Knowledge of God. And, What is God? *An Immense, and an Almighty Power: Great, without Limits; and he does whatsoever pleases him:* He that applies himself to This Study, Transcends the very Lot, and Condition of his Mortality. That Almighty Power is all that we do see, and all that we do not see. What is the difference betwixt the Divine Nature, and Ours? Man is Compounded; and his best part is his Mind: But, the Almighty is All Mind, and all Reason; and yet Mortals are so Blind, that the Actions of this Incomprehensible Power, so excellent for Beauty, Constancy, and Disposition, are look'd upon by many Men only as Fortuitous, and the Work of Chance: And subject to all the Tumults of Thunder, Clouds, and Tempests, that affect poor Mortals. And, this is not only the Folly, and Madnes  
of



of the Common People; but the Weakness also of Wise Men. There are, that arrogate to Themselves, the Faculties of Providence, and Reason, and the Skill of Disposing, as well Other Peoples Affairs, as their Own: And yet these very Men are so besotted, as to imagine, the World only to be Govern'd by an Unadvised Rashness: As if Nature knew not what she did. How Profitable would it be for Us, to know the Truth of Things, and to allow them their due Termes, and Measures? To enquire into the Power of the Almighty, and the Method of his Workings; Whether he made the *Matter* it self, or found it ready to his hand; and whether was First, the *Matter* it Self, or the *Idea* of it? Whether or no he does what he pleases; and what may be the Reason of so many seeming Imperfections in his Operations? It is well said of *Aristotle*, that we should handle Divine Matters with Modesty, and Reverence. When we enter into a Temple, or approach the Altar; we compose our Looks, and our Actions to all the Decencies



cencies of Humility, and Respect. How much more then does it concern us, when we treat of Heavenly things, To deal candidly; and not to let one Syllable pass our Lips that may Savor of Confidence, Rashness, or Ignorance? Truth lies deep, and must be fetch'd up at Leisure. How many Mysteries are there, which God hath placed out of our sight; and which are only to be reach'd by Thought, and Contemplation! The Notions of the Divinity are Profound, and Obscure; or else perhaps we see them without *understanding* them. But, the Divine Majesty is only Accessible to the Mind. What This is (without which Nothing is) we are not able to Determine: And, when we have guesst at some Sparks of it, the greatest part lies yet conceal'd from us. How many Creatures have we now in this Age, that never were known to us before? And, How many more will the next Age know more than we do? And many yet will be still reserv'd for After times. The very Rites of Religion are at this day a Secret, and unknown to  
many

many People. Nay, the very thing that we most eagerly pursue, we are not yet arriv'd at: That is to say; a Perfection in Wickedness. Vice is still upon the Improvement: Luxury, Immodesty, and a Prostitute Dissolution of Manners finds still new Matter to work upon. Our Men are grown Effeminate in their Habits, in their Motions, and in their Ornaments, even to the Degree of Whorishness. There's no body minds Philosophy, but for want of a Comedy perhaps, or in foul weather, when there is nothing else to be done.

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**POSTSCRIPT.**

# Postscript

**B**Efore I take my Last Leave of Seneca, I will here discharge my Conscience, as if I were upon my Last Leave with the Whole VWorld. I have been so Just, both to the Reader, and to the Author; that I have neither Left out any thing in the Original, which I thought the One might be the Better for, nor Added any thing of my Own, to make the Other Fare the Worse. I have done in This Volume of Epistles, as a good Husband does with his Cold Meat; They are only a Hache made up of the Fragments that remain'd of the Two Former Parts; which I could not well dispose of into any Other Form; or so Properly Publish under any Other Title. Let me not yet be understood to Impose This Piece upon the Publick, as an Abstract of Seneca's Epistles; any more than I did the Other, for the Abstracts of his Benefits, and Happy

## Postscript.

py Life. *It is in works of This Nature, as it is in Cordial Waters, we Taste all the Ingredients, without being able to Separate This from That ; but still we find the Virtue of every Plant, in every Drop. To return to my Allegory ; Books, and Dishes have This Common Fate ; there was never any One, of Either of them, that pleas'd All Palates. And, in Truth, it is a Thing as little to be Wish'd for, as Expected ; For, an Universal Applause is at least Two Thirds of a Scandal. So that though I deliver up these Papers to the Press, I Invite no Man to the Reading of them : And, whosoever Reads, and Repents ; it is his Own Fault. To Conclude, as I made this Composition Principally for my Self, so it agrees exceedingly Well with My Constitution ; and yet, if any Man has a Mind to take part with me, he has Free Leave, and Welcome. But, let him Carry This Consideration along with him, That He's a very Unmannerly Guest, that presses upon another Bodys Table, and then Quarrels with his Dinner.*

*The End.*

